



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>







Nos hæc novimus esse nihil. MART.

P L A Y S

WRITTEN BY

MR. JOHN GAY,

VIZ.

THE CAPTIVES,

A TRAGEDY.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

POLLY, or the SECOND PART of the
BEGGAR'S OPERA.

ACHILLES,

AN OPERA.

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE,

A COMEDY.

THE REHEARSAL AT GOTHAM,

A FARCE.

To which is prefixed an ACCOUNT of the
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. STRAHAN, T. LOWNDES, T. CASLON,
W. GRIFFIN, W. NICOLL, S. BLADON, and
G. KEARSLEY. MDCCLXXII.



AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF THE
AUTHOR.

MR. JOHN GAY was born at or near *Barnstable*, in *Devonshire*, and educated at the free-school there, under Mr. *William Rayner*, the master, who was well qualified to give him a just taste of classical learning. Being descended of an ancient family, whose estate was greatly impaired, his friends thought proper to place him in a way of improving his fortune by trade. In this design he was put apprentice to a silk mercer in *London*. But this station not suiting his liberal spirit, he began to shew his disgust to a shop, almost from his first entrance therein; and giving little attendance, and less attention to the business, he in a few years procured a release upon easy terms, and took a final leave of his master. Having thus honourably got free from all restraint, he followed the bent of his genius, and soon gave the public some admirable proofs of the character for which he was formed by nature; by writing his *Rural Sports*, a georgic, which he address'd to Mr. *Pope*.

These first specimens of his poetical talents; added to the sweetness of his temper, and an almost unexampled simplicity of manners, immediately procured him the esteem and affection of his brother poets; and

particularly endeared him to Mr. *Pope*, who was of the same age with him. In the society of such friends he passed a few years, cultivating his muse in that kind of improvident indolence and independency, which alone could make him perfectly happy. But his taste of life being too elegant for his fortune, he gladly accepted an offer made him in 1712, of living with the duchess of *Monmouth*, as her secretary. This situation set him at full leisure to indulge his poetic vein; and the year following he composed his *Shepherd's Week*, and publish'd it, with a dedication to lord *Bollingbroke*, in 1714. The same year he resign'd his post under the duchess, being appointed to attend the earl of *Clarendon*, in the like character, on an embassy from queen *Anne*, to the court of *Hanover*.

The queen's death put an end to all his towering hopes: however, upon his return home, he was receiv'd with the warmest welcome, by his friend before-mention'd; who advis'd him to push the advantage which his last employ had given him, of being personally known to the new sovereign, and his family. Accordingly he soon after took the opportunity of making his court to the princess of *Wales*, afterwards queen *Caroline*, on the arrival of her royal highness in *England*. This compliment was well received, and our author's farce, call'd *The What d'ye Call it*, being brought on the stage before the end of the season, both their royal highnesses honoured it with their presence. The very kind reception he met with from persons of the first distinction at this time, fill'd him with hopes of more substantial favours; and the failure of these made too deep an impression upon his tender nature, which upon that account was but ill-suited to the wavering state of a slender fortune. To divert this melancholy, Mr. *Pulteney* took our author with him to *Aix*, in *France*, in the year 1717, and the following year, he was invited by lord *Harcourt* to his seat in *Oxfordshire*.

In 1720, he published his poems, in quarto, by subscription, with good success; but this was presently

fently damp'd, by the losses that befel him in the stocks that remarkable year ; so that by degrees, he fell into such an utter despondency, as being attended with the cholic, brought his life in danger. In this unhappy situation he removed, for the benefit of the air, in 1722, to *Hampstead*. Recovering from this disorder, in 1724, he finished his tragedy, call'd *The Captives* ; and having the honour of reading it to her royal highness the princess of *Wales*, he was farther encouraged to write a set of *Fables* in verse, for the use of the late duke of *Cumberland* : these he publish'd in 1726, with a suitable dedication to that prince, who was then very young.

Upon the accession of his late majesty to the crown, the following year, in settling the queen's household, the post of gentleman usher to the princess *Louisa* was mark'd out for Mr. *Gay* ; but he declin'd the offer, as unworthy of him : and being much dissatisfied at not being better provided for, the following copy of verses were soon after handed about in manuscript, which having never been printed, are here presented to the reader.

A mother who vast pleasure finds,
In forming of her children's minds ;
In midst of whom with vast delight,
She pass'd many a winter's night ;
Mingles in every play, to find
What bias nature gave the mind ;
Resolving thence to take her aim,
To guide them to the realms of fame ;
And wisely make those realms their way
To those of everlasting day ;
Each boist'rous passion she'd controul,
And early humanise the soul,
The noblest notions would inspire,
As they were sitting by the fire ;
Her offspring, conscious of her care,
Transported hung around her chair.
Of Scripture heroes would she tell,
Whose names they'd list, ere they could spell ;

Then the delighted mother smiles,
 And shews the story in the tiles.
 At other times her themes would be,
 The sages of antiquity ;
 Who left a glorious name behind,
 By being blessings to their kind :
 Again she'd take a noble scope,
 And tell of *Addison* and *Pope*.

This happy mother met one day,
 A book of fables writ by *Gay* ;
 And told her children, Here's a treasure,
 A fund of wisdom, and of pleasure.
 Such decency ! such elegance !
 Such morals, such exalted sense !
 Well has the poet found the art,
 To raise the mind, and mend the heart.
 Her favourite boy the author seiz'd,
 And as he read, seem'd highly pleas'd ;
 Made such reflections every page,
 The mother thought above his age :
 Delighted read, but scarce was able
 To finish the concluding fable.
 What ails my child ? the mother cries,
 Whose sorrows now have fill'd your eyes ?
 Oh ! dear mamma, can he want friends,
 Who writes for such exalted ends.
 Oh ! base degenerate human kind,
 Had I a fortune to my mind,
 Shou'd *Gay* complain ? but now alas,
 Through what a world am I to pass !
 Where friendship's but an empty name,
 And merit's scarcely paid in fame.

Resolv'd to lull his woes to rest,
 She told him he should hope the best ;
 That who instruct the royal race,
 Can't fail of some distinguish'd place.
 Mamma, if you were queen, says he,
 And such a book was writ for me ;
 I know 'tis so much to your taste,
 That *Gay* would keep his coach at least.

My child, what you suppose is true,
 I see its excellence in you ;
 Poets whose writings mend the mind,
 A noble recompence should find :
 But I am barr'd by fortune's frowns,
 From the best privilege of crowns ;
 The glorious godlike power to bless,
 And raise up merit in distress.

But dear mamma, I long to know,
 Were that the case, what you'd bestow :
 What I'd bestow, says she, my dear,
 At least five hundred pounds a year.

The famous *Beggar's Opera* appeared upon the stage early in the ensuing season ; and was received with greater applause than was ever known : besides being acted in *London* 63 nights without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of *England* ; was play'd in many places to the 30th and 40th time ; and at *Bath* and *Bristol* 50 times.

The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in fans, and houses were furnish'd with it in screens. The fame of it was not confined to the author only. The person who acted *Polly*, 'till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town ; her pictures were engraved, and sold in great numbers ; her life written ; books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and jests. Furthermore, it drove out of *England*, for that season, the *Italian* opera, which had carried all before it for several years. Dr. *Swift* attributes this unprecedented, and almost incredible success, to a peculiar merit in the performance ; wherein what we call the point of humour is exactly hit : a point, he observes, which whoever can rightly touch, will never fail of pleasing a great majority ; and which in its perfection, is allowed to be much preferable to wit, if it be not rather the most useful and agreeable species of it.

The unparalleled success of that piece induced him, in 1729, to write a second part, call'd *Polly*; the representation of which on the stage, being forbid by the lord chamberlain, our author thought proper to print it by subscription, in quarto; and the advantage he made of it, that way, was deem'd a sufficient ballance for any supposed damage from the prohibition, especially as he was taken immediately into the protection of the duke and duchess of *Queensberry*, who made his case their own, and used him with an uncommon degree of kindness.

But all these extraordinary favours were not able entirely to remove a certain painful sense of his ill fortune at court. In a little time he relapsed into his old distemper, the cholic; after which he lived, or rather languished the remainder of his days, under an incurable dejection of spirits, residing mostly at *Amesbury*, a seat of his noble patrons, near *Stonehenge*, upon *Salisbury* plain; in so sweet a retirement, he was not without some cheerful intervals, which he still enjoyed in the company of his muse. In the winter seasons he came with the family to *London*, and was at their house in *Burlington-Gardens*, when he was suddenly seized with a violent inflammatory fever, which in three days put a period to his life, on the 4th of *December*, 1732; and his body was interred, on the 23d of the same month, in *Westminster-Abbey*, the pall being supported by the earl of *Chesterfield*, lord viscount *Cornbury*, the honourable Mr. *Berkley*, general *Dormer*, Mr. *Gore*, and Mr. *Pope*; the service being performed by the dean, the choir attending.

An elegant monument is since erected to his memory, with the following inscription, written by Mr. *Pope*.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild,
 In wit a man, simplicity a child ;
 Above temptation in a low estate,
 And uncorrupted e'en among the great.
 A safe companion, and an easy friend,
 Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end :
 These are thy honours ! not that here thy bust
 Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust ;
 But that the worthy and the good shall say,
 Striking their pensive bosoms — *Here lies GAY.*

Here lie the ashes of Mr. JOHN GAY,
 The warmest friend ;
 The most benevolent man :
 Who maintained
 Independency
 In low circumstances of fortune ;
 Integrity
 In the midst of a corrupt age ;
 And that equal serenity of mind,
 Which conscious goodness alone can give,
 Through the whole course of his life.

Favourite of the Muses,
 He was led by them to every elegant art ;
 Refin'd in taste,
 And fraught with graces all his own :
 In various kinds of poetry
 Superior to many,
 Inferior to none,
 His works continue to inspire
 What his example taught,
 Contempt of folly, however adorn'd ;
 Detestation of vice, however dignified ;
 Reverence of virtue, however disgraced.

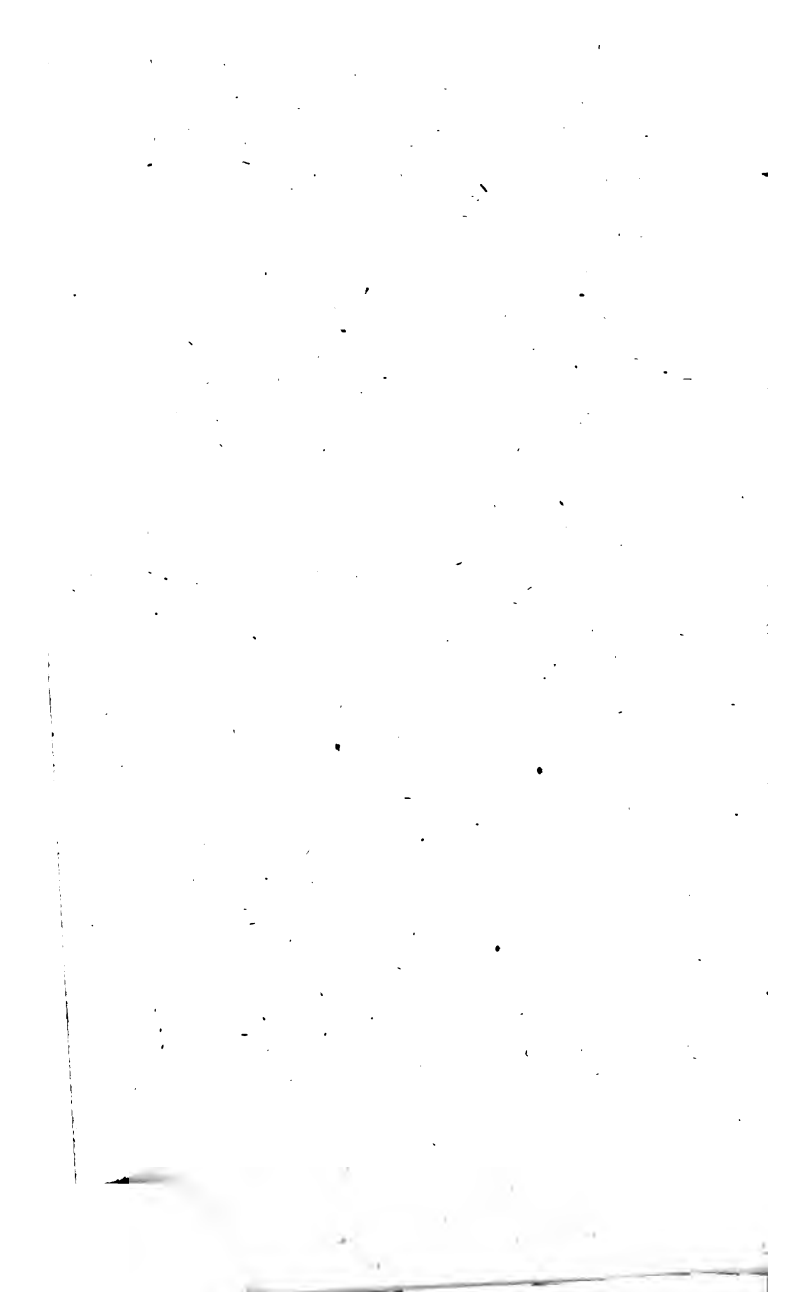
Charles and Catherine, duke and duchess of Queensberry, who loved this excellent man living, and regret him dead ; have caused this monument to be erected to his memory.

Mr. Gay died intestate, so that his fortune fell, as he desired it should, to his two widow sisters. The week before his death, he gave the play-house his opera, call'd *Achilles*, which was acted soon after with great applause. He left behind him a comedy, call'd *The Disress'd Wife*; the second edition of which was printed in 1750; and a humorous farce, call'd *The Rehearsal at Gotham*; both which are printed at the end of this volume.

THE
CAPTIVES.
A
TRAGEDY.

Splendide mendax, & in omne Virgo
Nobilis ævum.

HOR.



TO
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
P R I N C E S S.

MADAM,

THE honour I received from Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, in being permitted to read this play to you before it was acted, made me more happy than any other success that could have happened to me. If it had the good fortune to gain Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's approbation, I have been often reflecting to what to impute it, and I think, it must have been the Catastrophe of the
fable,

DEDICATION.

fable, the rewarding virtue, and the relieving the distressed : For that could not fail to give you some pleasure in fiction, which, it is plain; gives you the greatest in reality ; or else Your ROYAL HIGHNESS would not (as you always have done) make it your daily practice.

I am,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's

most dutiful

and most humbly devoted Servant,

JOHN GAY.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. WILKS.

*I Wish some author, careless of renown,
Would without formal prologue risque the town.
For what is told you by this useless ditty?
Only that tragedy should move your pity:
That when you see theatric heroes shown,
Their virtues you should strive to make your own.
What gain we by this solemn way of teaching?
Our precepts mend your lives no more than preaching.
Since then our Bard declines this beaten path;
What if we lash'd the critics into wrath?
Poets should ne'er be drones; mean, harmless things;
But guard, like bees, their labours by their stings.
That mortal sure must all ambition smother,
Who dares not hurt one man to please another.
What, sink a joke! That's but a mere pretence:
He shows most wit, who gives the most offence.
But still our squeamish author satire loaths,
As children, physic; or as women, oaths.
He knows he's at the bar, and must submit;
For ev'ry man is born a judge of wit.
How can you err? Plays are like paintings try'd,
You first enquire the hand, and then decide:
Yet judge him not before the curtain draws,
Lest a fair hearing should reverse the cause.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Phraortes,

Mr. Wilks.

Sophernes,

Mr. Booth.

Hydarnes,

Mr. Mills.

Araxes,

Mr. Williams.

Orbafius,

Mr. Bridgewater.

Magi.

Conspirators.

W O M E N.

Astarbe,

Mrs. Porter.

Captive,

Mrs. Oldfield.

Doraspe,

Mrs. Campbell.

THE
CAPTIVES.

ACT I.

SCENE, *The Palace.*

HYDARNES, CONSPIRATORS.

1st Conspirator.

IS night near spent?

2d Consp. 'Tis yet the dead of night;
And not a glimm'ring ray behind yon hills
Fore-runs the morning's dawn.

1st Consp. Thus far w're safe.

2d Consp. Silence and sleep throughout the palace
reign.

1st Consp. Success is now secure.

2d Consp. Are all assembled?

1st Consp. Our number's not complete.

2d Consp. What, not yet come!

Those two were over-zealous. It looks ill.

1st Consp. Why fear ye? I'm their pledge. I know
them brave.

They'll soon be with us and partake our glory.

Hyd. What mean these murmurs?

1st Consp. If mistrust divide us,

Our enterprize is foil'd, and we are lost.

Hyd. My vengeful heart pants for the glorious deed,
And my thirst quickens for *Phraortes'* blood.

Why stops the lazy night?—O morning, rise;

Call up the drowsy priests to the day's task;

The king to day the holy hill ascends,
And prostrate falls before the rising sun.

1st Consp. The sun shall rise, but rise to him no more.
For as he passes from the royal chamber
This strikes him home.

2d Consp. Let each man give him death.
We cannot be too sure.

Hyd. Revenge is mine.
By him my father fell, by him my brothers;
They fail'd, they perish'd in the great design:
Success and vengeance are reserv'd for me.
My father led the *Median* hosts to battle,
And all the hosts of *Media* sung his triumphs.

1st Consp. The people's hearts were his.

Hyd. The people saw
His royal virtues. He, to please his country,
Grasp'd at the sceptre which *Pbraortes* holds.
For this he suffer'd ignominious death:
His house was raz'd; my brave, unhappy brothers
Fell in his ruin; I alone escap'd;
In banishment I've sigh'd whole years away,
Unknown, forgot.—But now, even in his glory,
Now, while he leads the *Persian* princes captive,
And overflows whole nations with his armies,
I'll stab him to the heart.

2d Consp. What sound was that?

1st Consp. Lights pass across the rooms, and hasty
steps

Move to the king's apartment. Sleep is fled,
And all the palace lives; *Pbraortes* wakes.

2d Consp. Hush! hark again!

1st Consp. The echoes of the night
Catch ev'ry whisper.

2d Consp. Some have overheard us.

1st Consp. It must be so. The guards have took th'
alarm.

Our lives, (what's worse) our enterprize is lost!

2d Consp. Retreat, my friends; let us reserve ourselves
For some more prosp'rous hour.

Hyd. You raise up phantoms,
Then start at them yourselves. Some sickly qualm
Has wak'd the king too soon. Hence spring your fears,

Hence grows this mean surprize. Are these your boasts?
 Danger but whets the edge of resolution,
 And at each noise I grasp my dagger faster.
 Is every thing dispos'd to give th' alarm
 Among the *Persian* captives? Hope of freedom
 Will arm them on our side.

1st Consp. Were the blow struck,
 The rest would follow.

Hyd. See a gleam of light
 Darts from the king's apartment. Man your hearts,
 Be firm, be ready. Let not trembling fear
 Misguide your aim; let ev'ry wound be mortal.

1st Consp. This way and that way danger presses
 near us.

Where shall we fly? The tread of nimble feet
 Hurries from room to room, and all the palace
 Swarms as at noon.

2d Consp. Let us consult our safety.

1st Consp. To stay and to be taken is despair;
 And what's despair? but poor, mean cowardice.
 By timely caution heroes are preserv'd
 For glorious enterprize, and mighty kingdoms
 Are levell'd with the dust.

Hyd. Withdraw yourselves.
 Be still, and listen. These will best inform us
 If still it may be done; or if the blow
 Must be deferr'd. But hush, they come upon us.

*Enter Orbasius, Araxes, at one door; two Magi at the
 other, servants with lights. Hydarnes and
 Conspirators listening.*

Ara. Whence come ye, rev'rend fathers; why these
 looks
 Of terror and amaze? why gaze ye back
 As if the strides of Death stalk'd close behind you?

1st Mag. The king ev'n at this solemn hour of night
 Sent privately to call us to his presence.
 Ye Gods preserve him!

Ara. Why this wild confusion?
 In ev'ry passing face I read suspicion,

[*People crossing the stage.*]
 And haggard fear. Has sickness seiz'd the king,

And groans he with the latest pang of death ?
Speak forth your terrors.

2d Mag. May *Pbraortes* live !

Orba. Tell us the cause. If violence or treachery,
Our duty bids us interpose our lives
Between the king and death. O heaven, defend him !

1st Mag. The king, disturb'd by visionary dreams,
Bade the most learn'd magicians stand before him.
We stood before the king ; and the king trembled
While he declar'd his dream ; and thus I spoke :

‘ O may the great *Pbraortes* live for ever !
‘ Avert the dire presages of the dream !
‘ This night the Gods have warn'd thee to beware
‘ Of deep-laid treasons, ripe for execution ;
‘ Assassination lurks within the palace,
‘ And murder grasps the dagger for the blow.
‘ If the king trust his steps beyond his chamber,
‘ I see him bleed ! I hear his dying groan !
‘ Obey the voice of Heaven.

2d Mag. The king is wise ;

And therefore to the will of Heaven assented ;
Nor will he trust his life, a nation's safety,
From out the royal chamber. See the dawn
Breaks in the East, and calls us to devotion.

It is not man, but 'tis the Gods he fears. [*Ex. Magi.*

Hyd. Let's quit the palace while retreat is safe.

The deed must be deferr'd. Revenge, be calm.

This day is his, to-morrow shall be ours,

[*Ex. Conspirators on one side. Enter guards on the other.*

Orba. See that each centinel is on strict watch.

Let all the guards be doubled ; bar the gates,

That not a man pass forth without observance.

[*Ex. a party of soldiers.*

Go you ; and with the utmost vigilance

Search ev'ry room ; for treason lies in wait.

[*Ex. a party of soldiers.*

Ara. Divide yourselves this instant o'er the palace,

Think *Media* is in danger ; and remember

That he who takes a traitor, saves the king.

[*Exeunt soldiers.*

Orba. Whence can these dangers threaten ?

Ara. From the *Persians*.

Captivity's a yoke that galls the shoulders

Of new-made slaves, and makes them bold and resty.
 He that is born in chains may tamely bear them;
 But he that once has breath'd the air of freedom,
 Knows life is nothing when depriv'd of that.
 Our lord the king has made a people slaves,
 And ev'ry slave is virtuously rebellious.
 I fear the *Persian* prince.

Orba. You injure him.

I know him, have convers'd with him whole days,
 And ev'ry day I stronger grew in virtue.
 Load not th' unhappy with unjust suspicion;
 Adversity ne'er shakes the heart of honour:
 He who is found a villain in distress,
 Was never virtuous.

Ara. Who suspects his virtue?

'Tis not dishonest to demand our right;
 And freedom is the property of man.

Orba. That glorious day when *Persia* was subdu'd,
Sophernes fought amidst a host of foes,
 Disdaining to survive his country's fate:
 When the whole torrent of the war rush'd on,
Phraortes interpos'd his shield, and sav'd him.
 And canst thou think this brave, this gen'rous prince
 Would stab the man to whom he owes his life?

Ara. Whoever is, must feel himself, a slave,
 And 'tis worth struggling to shake off his chains.

Orba. But gratitude has cool'd his soul to patience.
 Ingratitude's a crime the *Persians* hate;
 Their laws are wise, and punish it with death.

Enter Guards with Sophernes.

Ara. Behold, *Orbasius*; have I wrong'd your friend?
 Behold a slave oblig'd by gratitude
 To wear his chains with patience! This is he
Phraortes honours with his royal favours!
 This is the man that I accus'd unjustly!
 Soldiers, advance, and bring the prisoner near us.

Soph. Why am I thus insulted? why this force?
 If 'tis a crime to be unfortunate,
 I well-deserve this usage.

Ara. 'Tis our duty.
 If you are innocent, let justice clear you.

Orbasus, to your charge I leave the prince ;
 Mean while I'll search the palace. On this instant
 Perhaps the safety of the king depends.

Come, soldiers, there are others to be taken,
 Mine be that care. I'll bring them face to face,
 When each man conscious of the other's crime,
 Shall in his guilty look confess his own.
 Guard him with strictness, as you prize your life.

[*Exit Araxes.*]

Orba. Keep off a while, and leave us to ourselves.

[*Guards retire to the back part of the stage.*]

I own, I think this rash suspicion wrongs you ;
 For murder is the mean revenge of cowards,
 And you are brave.

Soph. By whom am I accus'd ?

Let him stand forth. Of murder, murder say you ?
 Bear I the marks of an abandon'd wretch ?
 How little man can search the heart of man !

Orba. Our priests are train'd up spies by education ;
 They pry into the secrets of the state,
 And then, by way of prophecy, reveal them :
 'Tis by such artifice they govern kings.
 The last night's rumour of conspiracy
 Form'd the king's dream, and from that very rumour
 They venture to speak out, what we but whisper'd.
 'Twas they that call'd us to this early watch,
 'Twas they inform'd us that assassination
 Lies hid, ev'n now, within the palace walls.
 And we but execute the king's command
 In seizing all we find.

Soph. It is your duty,

And I submit. You cannot be too watchful
 To guard the life of such a worthy prince.
 I saw his prowess in the rage of battle,
 I found his mercy in the flush of conquest.
 Do not I share his palace, though a captive ?
 What can set limits to his gen'rous soul,
 Or close his lib'ral hand ? Am I a viper,
 To sting the man that warms me in his bosom ?

Orba. Why is power given into the hands of kings,
 But to distinguish virtue and protect it ?
 If then *Pbraortes* loves and honours you,

you thus to nourish your misfortunes
 Night walks and pensive solitude?
 To lose the pomp and glories of a crown,
 Circumstance so soon forgot!
 It humbled me to this affliction.
 The flower of *Persia* forth to battle,
 With overthrow and foul defeat,
 A slave in a soldier's breast!
 Alas! for 'tis the will of Heaven.
 I rather bleed amidst the carnage,
 Than the heart of filial piety.
 His lot not mine? His fall was glorious,
 He brave, but now unhappy people
 Their necks in shameful servitude,
 A spectacle of slight compassion.
 Calamities I have subdu'd,
 My dear wife! *Cylene*!
 Still there's hope.
 Support the load of real ills,
 Beneath imaginary sorrows?
 I still may live.
 Had I that hope,
 I banish from my heart all other cares.
 I still may live! no: 'tis impossible.
 Darts of arrows clatter'd on our shields,
 And her breast, and where I led, she follow'd;
 They broke our ranks, and like a torrent
 Drove *Cylene* from my fight for ever.
 She did survive that fatal day;
 Not then the spoil of some rude soldier,
 Proud was riotous and hot with conquest?
 Can I gaze on her beauty and resist it!
 I see her now, ev'n now before me,
 Of lust is tangled in her hair
 And her to his arms:—
 He snatch the dagger from his grasp,
 And lately plunge it in her bosom.
 Yet think she may have found a milder fate,
 Her are not of that savage temper;
 Not chance to be some brave man's captive?
 I ever lov'd to shield distress.
 Can I think thus? I cannot be so happy.

Orba. Is still the king a stranger to this sorrow,
That day and night lies rankling in your breast?

Soph. A grateful heart is all I've left to pay him.

Phraortes is as liberal as Heaven,
And daily pours new benefits upon me.
Last night he led me to the royal garden,
(His talk all bent to soften my misfortunes)
Like a fond friend he grew inquisitive,
And drew the story from me.

Orba. All his heart
Is turn'd to your relief. What further happen'd?

Soph. The king was mov'd, and straight sent forth
commands

That all the female captives of his triumph
Should stand before his presence. Thus (says he)
Unhappy prince, I may retrieve your peace,
And give *Cylene* to your arms again.

O source of light! O Sun, whose piercing eye
Views all below on earth, in sea or air;
Who at one glance can comprehend the globe,
Who ev'ry where art present, point me out
Where my *Cylene* mourns her bitter bondage;
If she yet live!

Orba. Why will you fear the worst?
Why seek you to anticipate misfortune?
The king commands. Obedience on swift wing
Flies through his whole dominions to redress you;
From hence you soon will learn what chance befell her.
'Tis soon enough to feel our adverse fortune
When there's no room for hope. This last distress
I know must move the king to tend'rest pity.

Soph. He dwelt on ev'ry little circumstance,
And as I talk'd, he sigh'd.

Orba. It reach'd his heart.
A tale of love is fuel to a lover.

Phraortes dotes with such excess of fondness,
All his pursuits are lost in that of love.

Astarbe suffers him to hold the sceptre,
But she directs his hand which way to point.

The king's decrees were firm and absolute,
Not the whole earth's confederate powers could shake
'em;

But now a frown, a smile, from fair *Astarbe*,
Renders them light as air.

Soph. If you have lov'd,
You cannot think this strange.

Orba. Yet this same woman,
To whom the king has given up all himself,
Can scarce prevail upon her haughty temper
To show dissembled love. She loves his power,
She loves his treasures; but she loaths his person:
Thus ev'ry day he buys dissimulation.
Whene'er a woman knows you in her power,
She never fails to use it.

Soph. That's a sure proof
Of cold indifference and fixt dislike.
In love both parties have the power to govern,
But neither claims it. Love is all compliance.
Astarbe seem'd to me of gentlest manners,
A tender softness languish'd in her eyes,
Her voice, her words, bespoke an easy temper.
I thought I scarce had ever seen till then
Such beauty and humility together.

Orba. How beauty can mis-lead and cheat our reason!
The queen knows all the ways to use her charms
In their full force, and *Media* feels their power.
Whoever dares dispute her hourly will,
Wakens a busy fury in her bosom.
Sure, never love exerted greater sway;
For she breaks through all the regal customs,
For she is not confin'd like former queens,
But with controlling power enjoys full freedom.
I am to blame, to talk upon this subject.

Soph. My innocence had made me quite forget
That I'm your prisoner. Load me with distresses,
They better suit my state. I've lost my kingdom,
A palace ill befits me. I'm a captive,
And captives should wear chains. My fellow soldiers
Now pine in dungeons, and are gall'd with irons,
And I the cause of all! Why live I thus
Amidst the pomp and honours of a court?
Why breathe I morn and ev'n in fragrant bowers?
Why am I suffer'd to behold the day?
For I am lost to ev'ry sense of pleasure.

Give me a dungeon, give me chains and darkness;
Nor courts, nor fragrant bowers, nor air, nor day-light
Give me one glimpse of joy—O lest *Cylene*!

Orba. Misfortunes are the common lot of man,
And each man has his share of different kinds:
He who has learnt to bear them best is happiest.
But see, *Araxes* comes with guards and prisoners.

Enter Araxes, Hydatnes, Conspirators, with guards.

Arax. Behold your leader. Where are now your hopes
[*To the Conspirators.*

Of murd'ring kings and over-turning nations?
See with what stedfast eyes they gaze upon him,
As thinking him the man that has betray'd them.
Angry suspicion frowns on ev'ry brow;
They know their guilt, and each mistrusts the other.
We seiz'd them in th' attempt to make escape,
All arm'd, all desperate, all of them unknown,
And ev'ry one is obstinately dumb. [To *Orba*.
I charge you, speak. Know you that prisoner there?
Ay, view him well. Confess, and merit grace.
What, not a word! Will you accept of life? [To *Hyd*.
Speak, and 'tis granted. Tortures shall compel you.
Will you, or you, or you, or any of you?
What, all resolv'd on death! Bring forth the chains.

[*Exit soldier.*

Orba. Be not too rash, nor treat the prince too
roughly.
He may be innocent.

Arax. You are too partial.
I know my duty. Justice treats alike
Those who alike offend, without regard
To dignity or office. Bring the chains.

[*Enter soldiers with chains.*

Orba. This over zeal perhaps may give offence,
The prince is treated like no common slave.
Phraortes strives to lessen his affliction,
Nor would he add a sigh to his distresses:
Astarbe too will talk to him whole hours,
With all the tender manners of her sex,
To shorten the long tedious days of bondage.
I'll be his guard. My life shall answer for him.

Ara. My life must answer for him. He's my charge,
And this is not a time for courtesy.
Are you still resolute and bent on death?

[*To the Conspirators.*

Once more I offer mercy. When the torture
Cracks all your sinews and disjoints your bones,
And death grins on you, arm'd with all his terrors,
'Twill loose your stubborn tongue. Know ye this man?

Hyd. We know him not; nor why we wear these
chains.

We ask no mercy, but appeal to justice.
Now you know all we know: lead to our dungeons.

[*Ex. Hyd. and Conspirators, guarded.*

Orba. How have you wrong'd the prince! these
shameful irons
Should not disgrace the hands of innocence.
Let's set him free.

Ara. This is all artifice,
To let their leader 'scape. Guards, take him hence;
And let him be confin'd till further orders.

Soph. Who shall plead for me in a foreign land!
My words will find no faith; for I'm a stranger:
And who holds friendship with adversity?
So fate may do its worst. I'm tir'd of life.

[*Exit, guarded.*

Ara. I've done my duty, and I've done no more.
Why wear you that concern upon your brow?
It misbecomes you in this time of joy.
Straight let us to the king, and learn his pleasure.
Justice is ours, but mercy's lodg'd in him.

Orba. I never can believe the prince so vile
To mix with common murderers and assassins.
I think him virtuous, and I share his suff'rings.
All generous souls must strong reluctance find,
In heaping sorrows on th' afflicted mind. [Exeunt.]

A C T II.

SCENE, *The Queen's Apartment.*

A S T A R B E.

HOW expectation can prolong an hour,
 And make it seem a day! a tedious day!
 What not yet come! the wonted hour is past:
 In vain I turn my eye from walk to walk,
Sophernes is not there.—Here, every morn
 I watch his pensive steps along the garden,
 And gaze and wish till I am lost in love!
 What not yet come! But hark! methinks I hear
 The sound of feet! How my heart pants and flutters!
 No. 'Twas the wind that shook yon cypress boughs.
 Where are my views of wealth, of power, of state?
[Rises.]

They're blotted from my mind. I've lost ambition.
 O love, thou hast me all. My dreams, my thoughts,
 My every wish is center'd in *Sophernes*.
 Hence, Shame, thou rigid tyrant of our sex,
 I throw thee off—and I'll avow my passion.
Doraspe. I can bear to think no longer. [Sits again.]

Enter Doraspe.

Dor. Why sits the queen thus overcast with thought?
 Is majesty all plac'd in outward pomp?
 Is it a queen, to have superior cares?
 And to excell in sorrows and distresses?
 'Tis in your power to have superior pleasures,
 And feel yourself a queen.

Ast. This mighty empire
 I know I do command, and him that rules it.
 That was a pleasure once, but now 'tis past!
 To you alone I have disclos'd my heart.
 I know you faithful.

Dor. What avails my service?
 Can I redress you? can I calm your mind?

Ast. Thou know'st, *Doraspe*, amidst all this power,
 That I'm a slave, the very worst of slaves.

The yoke of bondage, and the dungeon's horrors,
 Are easy sufferings, if compar'd with mine.
 I am confin'd to dwell with one I hate,
 Confin'd for life to suffer nauseous love,
 Like a poor mercenary prostitute :
 His fondness is my torture.

Dor. Love is a pleasure for inferior minds ;
 Your lot is rais'd above that vulgar passion.
 Ambition is the pleasure of the great,
 That fills the heart, and leaves no room for love.
 Think you're a queen, enjoy your pomp, your power ;
 Love is the paradise of simple shepherds.
 You hold a sceptre.

As. O insipid greatness !
 She who has never lov'd, has never liv'd.
 All other views are artificial pleasures
 For sluggish minds, incapable of love.
 My soul is form'd for this sublimer passion :
 My heart is temper'd for the real joy ;
 I sigh, I pant, I burn, I'm sick of love !
 Yes, *Media*, I renounce thy purple honours. [*Rises.*
 Farewell the pomp, the pageantry of state,
 Farewell ambition, and the lust of empire ;
 I've now no passion, no desire but love.
 O may my eyes have power !—I ask no more.
 Where stays *Sophernes* ? Were he now before me,
 My tongue should own what oft my eyes have spoke,
 For love has humbled pride.—Why this intrusion ?
 Who call'd you here a witness to my frailties ?
 Away and leave me.

Dor. I obey my queen.

As. *Dorasse*, stay. Excuse this start of passion ;
 My mind is torn with wishes, doubts, and fears ;
 I had forgot myself.—Should fortune frown,
 And tear the diadem from off my brow,
 Couldst thou be follower of my adverse fortune ?
 I think thou couldst.

Dor. If I might give that proof,
 Without your sufferings, I could wish the trial ;
 So firm I know my heart.

As. Life, like the seasons,
 Is intermix'd with sun-shine days and tempests.

Prosperity has many thousand friends ;
They swarm around us in our summer hours,
But vanish in the storm.

Dor. What means my queen,
To wound her faithful servant with suspicion?

Ast. Whene'er my mind is vex'd and torn with
troubles,

In thee I always find the balm of counsel :
And can I then mistrust thee ? No, *Dorasse*,
Suspicion ne'er with-held a thought from thee,
Thou know'st the close recesses of my heart :
And now, ev'n now, I fly to thee for comfort.

Dor. How my soul longs to learn the queen's
commands !

Ast. When conquest over-power'd my father's legions,
We were made captives of the war together ;
Phraortes saw me, rais'd me to his throne ;
Heav'n knows with what reluctance I consented !
For my heart loath'd him. But, O curs'd ambition !
I gave myself a victim to his love,
To be a queen, the outside of a queen.
I then was, what I'm now, a wretch at heart !
Whene'er I was condemn'd to hours of dalliance,
All *Media's* gems lay glitt'ring at my feet,
To buy a smile, and bribe me to compliance.
But what's ambition, glory, riches, empire ?
The wish of misers, and old doating courtiers ;
My heart is fill'd with love——Go, my *Dorasse*,
Enquire the cause that has detain'd *Sopernes*
From his accustom'd walk——I'm fix'd, determin'd,
To give up all for love.——A life of love.
With what impatience shall I wait thy coming !

Dor. Happy *Sopernes* !

Ast. If you chance to meet him,
Talk of me to him, watch his words, his eyes ;
Let all you say be turn'd to weak desire ;
Prepare him for the happy interview,
For my heart bursts, and I must tell it all.
To what an abject state am I reduc'd ?
To proffer love ! Was beauty given for this ?
Yes. 'Tis more gen'rous ; and I'll freely give
What kneeling monarchs had implor'd in vain.

Dor. This well rewards him for an empire lost.

[*Exit.*]

Ast. Have I not caught the eyes of wond'ring nations,
While warm desire has glow'd on ev'ry cheek,
Ev'n when I wore the pride of majesty?
When opportunity awakes desire,
Can he then gaze, insensible of beauty?
When ardent wishes speak in ev'ry glance,
When love and shame by turns in their full force,
Now pale, now red, possess my guilty cheek;
When heaving breasts, and sighs, and kindling blushes
Give the most strong assurance of consent,
In the convincing eloquence of love;
Will he then want a proof that's less sincere?
And must I speak?—O love, direct my lips,
And give me courage in that hour of shame!

Enter Doraspe.

Dor. May the queen never know a moment's sorrow;
Nor let my words offend!—the prince *Sophernes*,
Leagu'd with a crew of daring desperate men,
Had meditated to destroy *Phraortes*,
And let loose war and rapine o'er the land.
But Heav'n has made their machinations vain;
And they now groan in dungeons.

Ast. Then I'm wretched,
And ev'ry pleasing view of life is lost.
Was it confirm'd? or was it only rumour?

Dor. *Araxes* said *Sophernes* was his prisoner.
My haste would not allow me further question:
And this is all I learnt.

Ast. Have I not power?
I have. Why then, I'll give *Sophernes* freedom,
I'll give him life.—I think you nam'd *Araxes*;
That man to me owes all his growth of fortune;
And if I judge him right, he's very grateful.
Tell him the queen admits him to her presence.

[*Ex. Dor.*]

O Heaven! I thank thee for this blest occasion.
Did ever proof of fondness equal mine?
And sure so strong a proof must find return.
With what excess of transport shall I go

To lead him forth from heavy chains and darkness,
To liberty and love!—But see, *Araxes*.

Enter Araxes,

Ara. All health attend the mighty queen of *Media*.

Ast. I'm told, *Araxes*, that the *Persian* prince
Hath join'd in horrid league, and hath conspir'd
The murder of my lord and king *Phraortes*.
Speak forth; say what thou know'st.

Ara. The hand of heaven
Protects the king; and all the black design
Is shewn in open daylight. The foul traitor
Is taken in the snares of death he laid.
Sophernes is my charge. O base ingratitude,
That he, whom the king honour'd next himself,
That he, whom the king's mercy spar'd in battle,
Should mix with vile assassins! Justice longs
To punish the vast crime.

Ast. Owns he the guilt?

Ara. No. With the calmest face of innocence,
With looks known only to hypocrisy,
He solemnly deny'd it.

Ast. Is he confin'd?

Ara. Yes, with the strictest guard and heaviest irons.
The prison joining to the queen's apartment
Lodges the horrid crew in sep'rate dungeons.
To-day the king will mount the judgment-seat,
And death shall be their portion.

Ast. Is *Sophernes*

Stubborn and sullen? made he no confession?
I often have convers'd with that vile man,
That hypocrite, whose talk was always honest.
How have I been deceiv'd!—Yet, ere his sentence,
With secrecy I fain once more would see him.

Ara. I'm happy to obey my queen's commands.
His prison lies so close to these apartments,
That unobserv'd I can conduct him hither.

Ast. I know thee faithful, and such ready zeal
Shall always find reward. [Exit.

Ara. The queen is gracious.

Ast. Now my design is ripe for execution.
Then let *Doraspæ* well consult her heart,
— & she will share with me all change of fortune.

Dor. Doubt not your faithful servant. I'm prepar'd.
 I know, however heinous is his crime,
 Your intercession always must prevail.
 His gratitude will kindle into love,
 And in possession every wish be lost.

Ast. How little thou hast div'd into my thoughts !
 My purposes are otherways determin'd.
 I'll shake off bondage, and abandon empire ;
 For him disrobe myself of majesty ;
 Then to my native *Parthia* will I fly,
 With all my soul holds dear—my guide *Sopernes*.

Dor. Let me not find my gracious queen's displeasure
 If I dissent, and offer other counsel.
 Why will you quit your crown ; why fly from *Media* ?
 Does jealousy restrain your liberty ?
 Your love, your empire, both are in your power.

Ast. Mine's not the common passion of our sex,
 Which ev'ry day we can command at pleasure
 And shift and vary as occasion offers.
 My love is real and unchangeable,
 Controuls my heart, and governs absolute.
 My eyes, words, actions, are no more my own :
 My ev'ry thought's *Sopernes*.—Other women,
 Who have the power to practise little arts
 To cheat a husband, and delude his fondness,
 Ne'er knew the burning passion that I feel.
 Those are the trifling wanton airs of women,
 All vanity, and only love in name.
 No. She who loves, must give up all herself ;
 She ne'er can be content with a stol'n minute,
 Then pass whole days and nights with him she hates.
 Advise no further — for I am determin'd.

Dor. *Araxes*, with the *Persian* prince !

Ast. Retire.

[*Exit Doraspe.*]

Enter Araxes and Sopernes.

It is not meet, while in the royal presence,
 That he should wear these irons : take them off.

[*Ara. takes off the chains.*]

Now leave me ; and without attend my pleasure.

[*Exit Araxes.*]

Be not surpriz'd that I have call'd you hither,

Most noble prince, in this your hour of trouble ;
 For I ev'n bear a part in your misfortunes.
 Who's your accuser ?—whence those shameful chains ?

Soph. I'm charg'd with crimes of the most heinous nature :

If 'tis Heaven's will to try me with afflictions,
 I will not, like a dastard, sink beneath them,
 But resolutely strive to stem the torrent,
 Not the dark dungeon, nor the sharpest torture,
 Can ruffle the sweet calm of innocence.
 My chains are grievous, but my conscience free.

Asp. I long have mark'd your virtues, and admir'd them.
 Against a resolute and steady mind

The tempest of affliction beats in vain.

When we behold the hero's manly patience,

We feel his sufferings ; and my tears have own'd,

That what you bore with courage, touch'd my heart.

And when compassion once has reach'd the mind,

It spurs us on to charity and kindness :

Instruct me then which way to cure your sorrows.

Soph. The queen is gracious, and delights in mercy.

Asp. I speak with the sincerity of friendship.

Friendship is free and open, and requires not
 Such distant homage and respectful duty.

Forget that I'm a queen : I have forgot it ;

And all my thoughts are fix'd on thy relief.

Draw near me then, and as from friend to friend,

Let us discharge our hearts of all their cares.

Soph. How beautiful a virtue is compassion !

It gives new grace to every charm of woman !

When lovely features hide a tender soul,

She looks, she speaks, all harmony divine.

Asp. Tell me, *Sapphernes*, does not slav'ry's yoke

Gall more and more through ev'ry pace of life ?

I am a slave like you. And though a queen,

Possess of all the richest gems of *Media*,

I know no pleasure ; this distasteful thought

Imbitters all my hours ; the royal bed

Is loathsome, and a stranger to delight.

I'm made the drudge to serve another's pleasure.

O when shall I be free ! take, take your empire,

And give me peace and liberty again.

Soph. The strokes of fortune must be born with patience.

Ast. But I have lost all patience.—Give me counsel, Give me thy friendship, and assist a wretch Who thirsts and pants for freedom.

Soph. Who seeks succour From one whose hands are bound in double irons ? I am a slave, and captive of the war, Accus'd of treason and ingratitude, And must from hence go back to chains and darkness. But had I power, such beauty might command it.

Ast. But I have power, and all my power is thine, If I had arm'd myself with resolution To quit the pompous load of majesty, To fly far off from this detested empire, To seek repose within my native land, Wouldst thou then be companion of my flight, And share in my distresses and my fortune ?

Soph. The queen intends to try a wretched man, Whether he'd break all hospitable laws, The strictest oaths and ties of gratitude, To sacrifice his honour to such beauty That can command all hearts.

Ast. Tell me directly, Wouldst thou accept of freedom on these terms ?

Soph. How shall I answer ?

Ast. Is thy heart of ice ?

Or are my features so contemptible, That thou disdain'st to fix thy eyes upon me ? Can you receive this offer with such coldness ? I make it from my heart ; my warm heart speaks : Distrust me not. What, not a word ! no answer !

Soph. O may the queen excuse her prostrate servant, And urge no more a trial too severe.

Ast. What means *Sophernes* ? Why this abject posture ? 'Tis I should kneel ; 'tis I that want compassion.

[Gives him her hand.]

Thou art unpractis'd in the ways of women, To judge that I could trifle on this subject. Think how severe a conflict I have conquer'd, To over-rule ev'n nature and my sex ; Think what confusion rises in my face, To ask what (to be ask'd) would kindle blushes.

In ev'ry modest check!—where's shame? where's pride?
Sophernes has subdu'd them. Women, I own,
 Are vers'd in little frauds, and sly dissemblings:
 But can we rule the motions of the blood?
 These eyes,—this pulse—these tremblings—this confusion,

Make truth conspicuous, and disclose the soul.
 Think not I fly with man for his protection;
 For only you I could renounce a kingdom,
 For you, ev'n in the wild and barren desert,
 Forget I was a queen! ev'n then more happy
 Than seated on a throne. Say, wilt thou chuse
 Or liberty, and life, and poor *Astarbe*;
 Or dungeons, chains, and ignominious death!

Soph. O how I struggle in the snares of beauty!
 Those eyes could warm pale elders to desire;
 I feel them at my heart; the fever rages,
 And if I gaze again—how shall I answer!

Ast. How is my pride brought low! how vilely
 treated!

The worst of scorn is cold deliberation.

Soph. *Cylene* may be found. What take me from her?
 How can I go and leave my hopes for ever?
 Can I renounce my love, my faith, my all?
 Who can resist those eyes?—I go—I'm lost!
Cylene holds me back, and curbs desire. [*Aside.*]

Ast. Resolve and answer me. For soon as night
 Favours our flight I'll gather up my treasures:
 Prepare thee then, lest death should intercept thee,
 And murder all my quiet.

Soph. If in her sight
 I've favour found, the queen will hear me speak.
 How can my heart refuse her? how obey her?
 Can I deny such generous clemency?
 Join'd with all beauties ever found in woman?
 Yet think on my unhappy circumstance.
 I've giv'n my word, the strictest tie of honour,
 Never to pass beyond my bounds prescrib'd;
 And shall I break my faith? Who holds society
 With one who's branded with that infamy?
 Did not *Phraortes*, in the heat of battle,
 Stay the keen sword that o'er me menac'd death?
 —not I share his palace, and his friendship?

Does he not strive, by daily curtesies,
 To banish all the bitter cares of bondage ?
 And shall I seize and tear his tend'rest heart-string ?
 Shall I conspire to rob him of all peace ?
 For on the queen hangs ev'ry earthly joy,
 His ev'ry pleasure is compriz'd in you !
 What virtue can resist such strong temptation ?
 O raise not thus a tempest in my bosom !
 What shall I do ?—my soul abhors ingratitude.
 Should I consent, you must detest and loath me,
 And I should well deserve those chains, and death.

Ara. Is this thy best return for proffer'd love ?
 Such coldness, such indifference, such contempt !
 Rise, all ye Furies, from th' infernal regions,
 And prompt me to some great, some glorious vengeance !
 Vengeance is in my power, and I'll enjoy it.
 But majesty perhaps might awe his passion,
 And fear forbid him to reveal his wishes.
 That could not be. I heard, I saw him scorn me ;
 All his disdainful words his eyes confirm'd.
 Ungrateful man ! Hence, traitor, from my sight.
 Revenge be ready. Slighted love invokes thee.
 Of all the injuries that rack the soul,
 Mine is most exquisite ! Hence, to thy dungeon :
Araxes !

Enter Araxes.

Take the villain from my presence ;
 His crimes are black as hell. I'll turn away,
 Lest my heart melt and cool into compassion.
 His sight offends me. Bind his irons fast.

[Ara. puts on his irons.]

So : lead him hence ; and let *Doraspe* know
 The queen permits her entrance.

[Exeunt Araxes and Sophernes.]

Enter Doraspe.

Dor. What's the queen's pleasure ? See your servant
 ready.

Why are your eyes thus fix'd upon the ground ?
 Why that deep sigh ? and why these trembling lips ?
 This sudden paleness, and these starts of frenzy ?
 You're sick at heart.

Ast. Yes ; I will be reveng'd.

Dor. Lift up your eyes, and know me. 'Tis *Doraspe*.

Ast. Look on me, tell me, is my beauty blighted ?
And shrunk at once into deformity ?

Slighted ! despis'd ! my charms all set at nought !

Yes. I will be reveng'd. — O my *Doraspe*,

I've met with foul contempt, and cold disdain :

And shall the wretch who gave me guilt and shame,

The wretch who's conscious of my infamy,

Out-live that crime ? he must not, nay, he shall not.

Dor. Let reason mitigate and quell this fever ;

The safest, surest, is the cool revenge.

Rash anger, like the hasty scorpion's fury,

Torments and wounds itself.

Ast. It is in vain.

The torrent rushes on ; it swells, ferments,

And strongly bears away all opposition.

What means that hurry in the antichamber ?

What are those crowds ?

Dor. The king intends to mount the judgment-seat ;

And the conspirators now wait their sentence.

Ast. Go, tell *Araxes* (if with privacy

He could conduct him) I would see their chief ;

The desp'rate instrument of this bold scheme ;

This instant ; ere he stands before the presence.

[*Exit Doraspe.*]

Revenge, I thank thee for this ready thought :

Death now shall reach *Sophernes*, shameful death ;

Thus will I satiate love. His death alone

Can raze him from my heart, and give me peace.

Araxes conducts in Hydarnes, and retires.

The king is gracious, and delights in mercy ;

And know, that free confession merits life :

I'll intercede. Know you the prince *Sophernes* ?

You are unhappy men betray'd to ruin :

And will ye suffer for another's crime ?

Speak of him, as ye ought ; 'twas he betray'd you.

Hyd. If racks and tortures cannot tear confession

From innocence, shall woman's flattery do it ?

No ; my heart's firm, and I can smile on death.

Ast. Think not to hide what is already known.

— 'Tis to *Sophernes* that you owe those chains :

We've fathom'd his designs, they're all laid open ;
 We know him turbulent and enterprizing.
 By the foul murder of my lord the king.
 He meant to set his captive nation free.
 Unfold this truth, and I'll insure thy pardon.

Hyd. What! lead a hateful life of ignominy!
 And live the bane of all society!
 Shun'd like a pestilence, a curst informer!
 Yet since the fate of kingdoms may depend
 On what I speak ; truth shall direct my lips.
 The queen has offer'd grace. I know the terms.
Ast. By the king's life, I swear.

Enter Araxes.

Ara. Excuse this entrance,
 The pris'ner must attend.

Ast. I'm satisfy'd.
 This man seems open, and may be of service.
 [Exeunt Araxes and Hydarnes;
 How my heart bleeds, thus to pursue revenge
 Against the man I love! But me he scorns;
 And from my beauty turns his head away
 With saucy arrogance and proud contempt.
 I could forgive him ev'ry other crime,
 Ev'n the base murder of my dearest friend;
 But slighted love, no woman can forgive:
 For thro' our life we feel the bitter smart,
 And guilt and shame lie fest'ring at the heart.



A C T III.

SCENE, *A Room of State with a Throne.*

HYDARNES, Conspirators, ORRASIUS, Guards.

1st Conspirator.

THE information of those two vile cowards,
 Who mingled with us brave and active spirits,
 Hath giv'n us death. Let those mean creatures live,
 They're fitter for the world.

2d Consp. Lead us to death.

Hyd. Death is pronounc'd on you, on me, on all.
Would I could take your guilt upon myself,
So to preserve some virtue in the world :
But those informers have deny'd me that ;
We all must perish, and fall unreveng'd.
But since I cannot take your crimes upon me ;
I'll live, and execute our great design,
And thus revenge your deaths.

1st Consp. Could this be done !

Hyd. It can.

1st Consp. You flatter us.

Hyd. I say, I'll do it.

Soon as the king returns to sign our sentence,
Only confirm the words which I shall speak,
And I'll revenge you soon, and soon be with you.

[*Talks to them apart.*]

Orba. The guilty perish ; innocence is freed.
Suspicion has not cast the smallest stain
Upon the virtuous *Persian*. Those accusers,
Who have condemn'd their fellows, know him not.
Of all the pleasures that a monarch tastes,
Sure mercy is most sweet ! 'Tis heavenly pleasure,
To take the galling chains from off the hands
Of injur'd innocence ! That privilege
O'er-balances the cares that load a crown.

*Enter Phraortes, who seats himself on the throne ; Magi,
Araxes, Sophernes, Guards, and Attendants.*

Ara. Make room : The *Persian* prince attends his sentence.

Phra. Most noble prince, I grieve that you were injur'd.

When foul conspiracy molests a state,
The ear of kings is open to suspicion,
And we grow jealous of our bosom friends.
When calumny would blast a virtuous man,
And justice has made clear his innocence ;
It only throws a brighter lustre on him,
And serves to make his virtues more conspicuous.
Approach the throne ; and let the king's embrace
Make some atonement for your shameful bonds.

I feel your sufferings, and my heart grows sonder.
 Now bring the pris'ners to receive their sentence.
 Justice cries loud for vengeance on your crimes :
 Say, have you ought to plead to ward the blow,
 Ere I enroll your names among the dead ?

Hyd. That I design'd to bathe these hands in blood,
 Even in thy blood, O king, I dare confess,
 And glory in th' attempt. I know thy power ;
 I know that death, with all his dreadful tortures,
 Stands ready at thy nod. Give then the signal,
 For I unmov'd can face the ghastly terror.
 How is thy wisdom foil'd ! Prepare to follow.
 Think not with us our enterprize is lost :

A king shall bleed to pacify our ghosts.
 Come, lead to death. Spend all thy wrath on us.
 The raging tyger bites the shaft that wounds him,
 And spares the man who threw it. I have done.

Pbra. These are the starts and ravings of despair.
 Think'st thou by threats to force me into mercy ?

Hyd. I grow impatient ; lead me to my fate.

Pbra. Know you that I have life within my power ?

Hyd. I know the utmost of thy power is death.

Mag. Ye Gods avert his words, and save the king !

Pbra. What said he ? Speak again.

Hyd. Death is my choice.

Pbra. I will be satisfy'd.

Hyd. I've said too much.

Pbra. Say more, or torture shall extort it from you.

Hyd. Let torture do its worst. You dare not try it.

Mag. If memory can recal the solemn speech,
 These were his very words :

• A king shall bleed to pacify our ghosts.

• The raging tyger bites the shaft that wounds him,

• But spares the man who threw it.' Was it thus ?

Hyd. Now let your wisdom fathom this deep secret.
 I answer no more questions.

Pbra. Reverend fathers,

What may these words portend ? Expound the mystery.

Mag. Thy sacred life, O king, is still in danger.
 While justice pours down vengeance on these wretches,
 These mean subservient instruments of mischief,
 Their leader 'scapes, and lives for future crimes.

Hyd. Go on.

Mag. The words imply no more.

Hyd. 'Tis well.

All's safe.—I'm ready.—Why is death delay'd?

Phra. Thus speaks the voice of mercy from my lips.

Th' irrevocable sentence is not sign'd,

And still there's room for hope. Attend, and live :

By this bright sceptre, by the throne of *Media*,

By yon great light that rules the rolling year,

If you lay ope the depth of this foul treason,

And point me out that undetected villain,

I swear, to grant you life and liberty.

Speak now, or death shall seal your lips for ever.

Hyd. The royal word is giv'n, and I accept it.

The king shall live, and all his foes shall perish.

Danger stands near the throne. How blind is justice!

The *Persian* prince!

Phra. *Sophernes*!

Hyd. He's a traitor.

'Twas he that put the dagger in my hand.

So. Now I have betray'd. O love of life!

Where was my resolution? I'm a coward;

And cowards can endure a life of shame.

Phra. *Sophernes*!—Let strong proof confirm your charge;

I must have proof.

Hyd. Call in my fellow-prisoners.

Soph. What can set bounds to man's impiety,

And where is virtue safe? Accus'd thus falsely,

With all the strongest circumstance of guilt,

By one I know not! Heav'n has then determin'd.

That I must fall. Shall man contest with *Jove*?

'Tis all in vain. The will of Fate be done.

Hyd. Those who accus'd us, brib'd with *Persian* gold,

Conceal'd the author of our enterprize.

Enter Conspirators.

Know ye that man?

1st Consp. Would he had been unknown.

Hyd. The king has trac'd our mischief to the source;

Who was it prompted you to this attempt?

Had ye not views to set a nation free?

And to restore him to his crown and kingdom?

1st Consp. By him we sell, 'tis just that he fall with us.

2d Consp. So, now one ruin has involv'd us all.

Pbra. Death is the lot of those that thirst for blood.
Conduct them hence.—This hour prepare to suffer,
[*Exeunt Conspirators.*]

Ungrateful prince !

Soph. Since 'tis the will of heaven
To load me with calamities and shame,
Since the most searching eye cannot discern
The heart of man ; O where shall I find justice ?
I am a stranger, in adversity,
Bereft of wealth and power, without a friend.

Pbra. Hence, base dissembler. Take him from my
presence.

When hypocrites are stript of virtue's plumes,
Vice then appears more hideous and deform'd.
Back to thy dungeon, to remorse and death.

Soph. Vain are excuse and solemn protestation ;
How shall my words prevail, and truth appear,
When there's a crowd of witnesses against me !
The guilty perish with remorse and horror,
But innocence ne'er feels the sting of death.
Death is a blessing to adversity ;
Anxiety, calamity, and sorrow,
And all the daily fretting cares of life,
Are shook from off our shoulders, and we rest.

[*Exit Sophernes guarded.*]

Hyd. Safety now guards the throne, and *Media's*
happy.

Pbra. I ratify my word, and give you life,
I give you liberty ; but on conditions.
Those I shall send you soon ; and then you're free.
O Sun ! I thank thee ; thy all-seeing eye
Has trac'd the villain through his secret ways,
And now the hand of justice is upon him.

Ara. *Media* rejoice.

All. May the king live for ever !

Pbra. Proclaim a festival for seven days space ;
Let the court shine in all its pomp and lustre ;
Let all our streets resound with shouts of joy ;
Let musick's care-dispelling voice be heard ;
The sumptuous banquet and the flowing goblet

Shall warm the cheek, and fill the heart with gladness :
For *Media's* foes are put to shame and death.

Astarbe shall sit sovereign of the feast,
That queen of beauty shall direct our pleasures.
I'll to her bower.—I would have no attendance.

[*Exeunt Phraortes, &c.*

Enter Doraspe.

Dor. Inform me, what has pass'd ?

Ara. The queen's conjectures

The king has now confirm'd. The *Persian* prince,
That hypocrite, is known, and prov'd a traitor,
And leader of that crew of vile assassins.
But see the queen.—The king is gone to seek her.
Excuse my haste ; for duty calls me hence. [*Exit.*

Enter Astarbe.

Ast. 'Twas downright arrogance. I saw his scorn.
A lover reads the thought of every look,
And needs no comment or interpreter.
What woman can forgive that worst of insults ?
Not ev'n the most deform'd of all our sex
Can bear contempt. And shall I pardon it ?
To pardon it, is to insult myself,
And own that I deserve it. [*aside.*] Know you ought
Of what the king in judgment has determin'd ?

Dor. *Sophernes* was accus'd.

Ast. Was he found guilty ?

Dor. Yes, prov'd a traitor.

Ast. Then I'm satisfy'd.

Dor. How one affliction crowds upon another,
To punish this ungrateful man !

Ast. What mean you ?

Dor. It is confirm'd among the captive women
(Who now attend to pass before the presence)
His wife was slain in battle.

Ast. Would he were dead !

Yet were he dead, would he die in my thoughts ?
Talk to me, speak ; leave me not to reflection.

[*To Doraspe.*

Yet what will talk avail ?—I've lost attention.
Were her words soft and soothing as the lyre,

THE CAPTIVES.

47

Or strong and sprightly as th' enlivening trumpet,
I could hear nought but conscience. Would he were dead!
You shall not leave me.

Dor. See, the king returns.

[*Exit.*

Enter Phraortes.

Phra. Welcome, my queen ; how my heart springs
to meet thee !

Each day, each hour, thy beauty grows upon me,
Ev'n while I gaze, some undiscover'd charm
Opens itself, and wounds my heart anew.
Rejoice, *Astarbe* ; *Media* is deliver'd :
The gathering storm that threaten'd desolation,
Is over-blown, and all is now serene.
Then let us give our future days to pleasure ;
My ev'ry pleasure is compris'd in thee.

Ast. Be firm in justice, nor give way to mercy,
'Tis the mind's frailty, and the nurse of crimes.
Punish : and root out treason from the land.

Phra. *Sophernes* was their chief.

Ast. Ungrateful villain !

Phra. How he deceiv'd me !

Ast. Your too easy nature
Must always harbour mischiefs in your empire.
Does he still live ?

Phra. His death is fix'd and sign'd.

Ast. Each hour he lives, your people doubt your
justice.

Would you deter the populace from crimes,
Let punishment be sudden. That's true mercy.

Phra. He never shall behold another sun.

But why should cares of state intrude upon us ?

Ast. Why this reproof ? In what have I deserv'd it ?
All my concern was for the peace of *Media*,
And for your safety. I have said too much.

Phra. What has *Astarbe* ask'd, that I refus'd ?
Thy beauty has all power. Who waits without ?
Go ; let the captives be dismiss'd the palace,

[*Speaks at the door.*

The king resigns his privilege of choice.
Should the selected beauties of the world [*To Astarbe.*
In full temptation stand before my presence,

Still would my heart and eye be fixt on thee.
 Thy charms would (like the sun's all-powerful rays)
 Make all those little stars of beauty fade.
 Why that dejected look? that thoughtful sigh?
 In what have I offended? If to love,
 Be to offend, *Phraortes* is most wretched.

Enter Araxes.

Ara. I spoke the king's commands; when from
 the crowd

One of the captives rose, and humbly pray'd
 Admission to the throne.

Phra. I hear no suits.

Ara. She wish'd to speak a matter of importance.

Phra. Dismiss them all. Let us retire, my queen.

Ast. Araxes, stay. [*Araxes going out.*]

Phra. What is *Astarbe's* pleasure?

Ast. This matter should be search'd. The fate of
 empires

Turns often on the slightest information;
 And were my counsel worthy to be heard,
 I would admit her.

Phra. Let her be admitted. [*Exit Araxes.*]

[*Phraortes seats Astarbe on the throne, then places
 himself by her. The guards enter, and range them-
 selves on each side.*]

Enter Captive, Doraspe, and Attendants.

Phra. Arise, fair maid; and let thy suit be heard.

Cap. The King has done his prostrate servant
 justice. [*Kneeling.*]

Thus low I pay my thanks to heaven and you.

Phra. Rise from that humble posture, and speak forth.

Cap. The *Persian* prince, to whom we owe our
 bondage, [*Rises.*]

'Tis said, is doom'd to death for horrid treachery.

Phra. He well deserves it. If you fall before me,
 To melt me into mercy with your tears,
 Woman, your tears are frustrate. Take her hence.

Cap. I speak for mercy! No, I sue for tortures.
 With rapture I could gaze upon his sufferings,
 Enjoy his agonies and dying groans,
 And then this hand could stab him to the heart.

Pbra. Whence rose this furious spirit of revenge ?

Cap. By brutal violence he slew my husband.
Excuse my tears ; Love calls them from my eyes.
With him I lost all joy, all peace and comfort.

Pbra. What mov'd *Sophernes* to the barbarous deed ?

Cap. My husband was distinguish'd in his armies ;
With him I always shar'd the toils of war,
The tedious marches, and the scorching suns,
For love makes all fatigues seem light and easy.
Sophernes saw me, sigh'd, and spoke his passion.
I spurn'd his offers, and despis'd his suit.
He still persisted, and my virtue strengthen'd :
Till on a day, inflam'd with loose desire,
He sent my lord upon some feign'd command ;
I in his tent sat waiting his return,
Then suddenly the ravisher rush'd in.

[Weeps.

Pbra. Go on.

Cap. He seiz'd me, tore me, dragg'd me to his arms ;
In vain I struggled ; by resistance weaken'd
I lost all strength, and so—he spoil'd my honour.
O shame ! O brutal force !

[Weeps.

Pbra. Unhappy woman !
Proceed.

Cap. Just in the moment of my shame
My husband enter'd. Strait the villain left me,
And, desperate by the stings of guilt and terror,
He stabb'd him to the heart.

[Weeps.

Pbra. Most monstrous villain !
His life's a series of the blackest crimes.

Cap. I in the hurry of the murder fled,
And 'scap'd the tyrant's power. Alone, disguis'd,
I've past away my restless hours in sorrow.
Revenge was all my wish, and all my comfort ;
For that I've watch'd him through long weary marches,
And revenge gave me strength and resolution.
Why fell he not by me ? His crime requir'd it.
Vengeance o'ertakes him for another guilt,
And I have lost revenge. O may he feel
The pain and horror due to both his crimes.

Pbra. His death is sign'd.

Cap. That is his due for treachery.

Pbra. What would revenge have, more? Th' offender's blood

Allays its strongest thirst.

Cap. Most gracious king, [*Kneels.*]

Hear an unhappy woman's just petition,
And may my prayer find favour and acceptance!

Grant me to see him in his latest gasp;

Let my appearance strike him with confusion;

Let me awake fresh terrors in his conscience,

And bring my murder'd husband to his view.

Entrust the sword of justice in my hand;

The stroke shall then be sure.

Pbra. What fortitude

Lies hid beneath that face of softest feature!

The death of his confederates is sign'd,

And he with privacy this very evening

Shall be dispatch'd in prison. Now you're satisfy'd.

Cap. O, were that office mine!

Asf. For such offence,

He cannot feel too much; her suit is just,

Then let me intercede in her behalf;

Grant her request. Give her the fatal signet;

Give her the dagger.—Such revenge is virtue.

Pbra. Take this: your boon is granted. Soon my orders,

[*Gives her his dagger.*]

Shall send you to revenge a husband's murder.

Let her attend without. Draw near, *Axaxes*.

[*Exit* Captive.

[*Phraortes talks aside to Axaxes.*]

Asf. What, sue to her! and when I sued disdain me!

How my disgrace grows on me! Let him perish,

And perish by that woman. My resentment

Kindles and burns, to take her charge upon me.

Yet still, would he relent, I could forgive him.

Dor. His wife is dead on whom his heart was fix'd:

That obstacle's remov'd.

Asf. And death hangs o'er him,

That fight perhaps may shake his resolution.

If I could hope, I would delay his sentence.

I dread his death. What is there to be done?

I'll see him ere he dies. O, awful thought!

Yes, I will see him, and renew my offers

In his last moments ; for when'er he dies
My mind will ne'er know peace. I will defer it.
I'll sooth the king in his soft hours of love,
When all his strongest purposes are nothing.
When 'tis deferr'd—Would I could cease from thought !

Phra. Tell her, as soon as justice is perform'd,
The king requires her thanks—She's wond'rous fair !
You know my will ; these are my last commands,
Let punctual care and diligence obey me. [*Ex. Araxes.*
Go, bid the priest prepare the sacrifice ;
This ev'ning shall the fragrance of devotion
Smoak in our temples, and perfume the skies.
Phraortes shall attend the solemn rites,
To pay his grateful thanks in songs of joy.

[*Exeunt Doraspe and Attendants.*

Astarbe, come.—One glance of those bright eyes
Dispells all care, and empires are forgot.
In what is man superior to the brute ?
Brutes eat, drink, sleep ; like us, have all the senses.
The male and female meet, then coldly part,
Part with indifference, and desire is cloy'd :
In love alone we feel the immortal part,
And that celestial fire refines the heart.



A C T IV.

S C E N E, a Prison:

HYDARNES, Conspirators:

Hyd. I Shall survive but for a little space ;
Doubt not my plighted faith, and die in peace ;
What is an hour of life ! an hour of torment.
Think then what I shall suffer for your sake,
How I shall long and pant to be among you !
To him who fears not death revenge is sure ;
To him who fears not death revenge is speedy.
Soon as the chains are struck from off these hands,
I'll dye them purple in the royal blood ;

I'll watch all time. The throne shall not secure him;
The solemn temple, even that sacred ground,
Shall not protect him from my resolution.

Would it were done; that we might fall together!

1st Consp. May all success attend thy glorious purpose!
Thinking upon thy brave undaunted spirit,
I shall forget my pains, and smile in torture,
Ev'n when the sharpest pang of death is on me.

Hyd. Ere you are cold, my ghost shall overtake you,
And bring the welcome news.—Impatience racks me.

2d Consp. We thank our bold revenger, and will die
Like men that well deserv'd so great a chief.

3d Consp. Farewell. And when you lift the dagger
for the blow,

Think on my friendship.

4th Consp. And on mine.

5th Consp. And mine.

1st Consp. Think of us all, and give him death for each.

Hyd. Farewell, unhappy friends; you're brave and
true,

And you entrust one who deserves such friendships.
Your prayers and wishes shall direct the dagger
Deep in his heart. And when this deed is done,
I've done my task of life, and I'll resign it.

Enter Araxes, and officers.

Ara. Time presses on us, and your hour is come.
We must obey our orders. Lead them hence.
Torture and death expect you.

1st Consp. Well. Lead on.

Ara. 'Tis your last moment.

1st Consp. We're impatient for it.

Ara. Stay here till my return. To you, my message
[To Hyd.

Is of a sweeter sound: 'tis life, 'tis freedom.
I'll see them to the scaffold; then discharge you.

[*Exeunt Araxes, Conspirators, and Officers.*

Hyd. What's death to that I feel within! 'Tis nothing.
Tortures but tear the flesh, and crush the bones;
But guilt and horror tear my restless soul,
And ev'ry thought's an arrow in my heart.
Saphernes is condemn'd, and I accus'd him.

For what?—For means to satiate my revenge,
 And that's sufficient.—O revenge, support me!
 What, am I grown a coward? Does repentance,
 Does vile contrition sink my boasted courage?
 Does resolution stagger! Hence, away,
 I will not hear thee, dastard, meddling Conscience!
 No. I'll go on, I feel my spirits rise;
 My heart grows harder, and I scorn remorse;
 That's the poor whining refuge of a coward.
 My friends are now expiring. Hark, their groans
 Start me from thought, and summon me to vengeance:
 I come, my friends; in that great deed I'll fall.

Enter Araxes.

Ara. *Phraortes* sends you life and liberty.
 Twelve days are granted you to pass the confines
 Of his domains: to stay beyond that time
 Annuls his pardon, and your life is forfeit.
 You're now discharg'd. Be grateful for this mercy,
 Pray for the peace of *Media*, and repent.

Hyd. *Media*, farewell. With all the wings of speed
 I fly thy bounds. Let me forget thy name;
 'Twill bring to my remembrance my lost friends.

[*Exit.*

Ara. Come forth, unhappy prince; excuse my words:

[*Unlocks the dungeon.*

'Tis with reluctance that I bring the message.
 Your death's at hand.

Soph. Death is the only friend
 That I have left; thy message is most welcome.
 My friend's at hand; O how long I to meet him!
 In him is all my hope, in him my refuge,
 He shall disburthen me of all misfortune,
 He shall wipe off calamity and sorrow,
 And give me peace and everlasting rest.
 I thank thee for the news.

Ara. Such unconcern,
 Such steady fortitude amidst afflictions,
 Was never seen till now.

Soph. My wife is dead!
 And I have no attachment to the world.
 What is't to live? And who counts life a blessing?

It is to see injustice hold the scale,
 And weigh with partial hand the deeds of men ;
 It is to see a race of servile flatterers
 Worship the author of all mischief, gold ;
 To see oppression rich, and virtue starving.
 Death only closes this distasteful scene.

Ara. This scorn of death appears like innocence.

Soph. All mortal justice errs. Heaven knows the heart.
 'Tis easy in my circumstance to dye,
 For I have no possessions to forego :
 My kingdom is another's ; round my couch
 No faithful servants stand with weeping eyes ;
 No darling children cling around my neck,
 And with fond kisses warm my hollow cheek ;
 No wife, who wern, and wearied out with grief
 Faints in my arms. These give the pangs of death ;
 These make us covet life. But I leave nothing.

Ara. What manly resolution ! I grieve for you.

Soph. At death's approach the guilty conscience
 trembles,

But I have not those horrors.—Hark, he knocks.

[Knocking heard.]

With what impatient joy I come to meet thee !

Ara. Farewell, thou most unfortunate of men ;
 A mind so great, unshaken by distress,
 Deserv'd a nobler end. Forgive my duty,
 It seems severe, but 'tis the king's command ;
 The dungeon must confine you.

Soph. I submit. [*Araxes locks him in the dungeon.*]

Enter Captive.

Cap. This letter will instruct you in your duty.

Ara. The prisoner shall be given into your hands.

Cap. And he shall perish by an injur'd woman.

Thus has the king decreed ; so shall he suffer,
 Both for his treason, and my murder'd lord.
 To see me arm'd with such just resolution,
 My husband's ghost is pleas'd, and smiles upon me.
Phraortes gave this dagger : this shall end him.

Ara. Within that iron gate he mourns in darkness.

[Gives the keys.]

This will conduct you.—'Tis the king's command,

Soon as the bloody office is perform'd,
That you present yourself once more before him.

Cap. His will shall be obey'd.

Ara. He's now your charge.

Cap. And soon my charge shall end.—Leave me to justice.

How will my sight dismay his guilty soul !
Ev'n while that terror preys upon his heart,
I'll hurl him to the deepest shades below.
But I delay ; and justice grows impatient.
I'd be alone.. You now have done your duty.

[Exit Araxes.]

Cap. Come forth, *Sapphères*. [Unlocks the dungeon.]

Soph. I will meet thee, death.

Cap. Draw near.

Soph. Hark ! was it not a woman's voice ?
That voice no more is sweet ;—*Cylene's* dead.
Yes. 'Tis the queen. Here satiate thy revenge,
My bosom heaves, and longs to meet the dagger.
Why is thy hand so slow ?

Cap. Look on this face, [Lifts up her veil.]
Is not thy heart acquainted with these eyes ?
And is thy ear a stranger to this voice ?
What, not a word !

Soph. O dear delusion !

[Faints.]

Cyl. Wake.

'Tis thy *Cylene* calls, thy lost *Cylene*.
Cannot this bosom warm thee into life ?
Cannot this voice recall thy sinking spirits ?
Cannot these lips restore thee ? O look up ;
Thy voice, thy lips, could call me from the dead.
Look up, and give me comfort.

Soph. 'Tis *Cylene*.

'Tis no delusion. Do I live to see thee ?
And must I be torn from thee ? cruel thought !
O tyrant death, now thou hast made me fear thee !

Cyl. When will misfortunes leave us ?

Soph. Death must end them.

'Twas said you fell in battle ; from that time
I lost all pleasure, and desire of life.

Cyl. In that sad day of our adversity,
When *Persia* was made captive, every eye

Wept for the fall of my dear lord *Sophernes*,
 For you they sorrow'd, and forgot their bondage.
 I lost myself in heart-consuming grief,
 And, lest a conqueror's arrogance and pride
 Should tempt them to condemn a captive queen
 To his loose hours, industriously I spread
 The rumour of my death; and by those means
 Have sigh'd away my days obscure, unknown.

Soph. How gain'd you this access? and why that dagger?

Cyl. This is no time for talk; consult thy safety.
 Catch at the present moment, for the next
 May throw us back again into despair.

Soph. What means, my love? No innocence can stand
 Against the voice of perjurd calumny.

Cyl. This dagger was design'd to murder thee;
 And I am sent upon that bloody errand:
 This hand that now is thrown about thy neck,
 Was to have done the deed. O horrid thought!
 Unknown, among a train of captive women,
 They brought me to the palace; there I learnt
 The tale of thy unhappy sufferings,
 And how the king had sign'd the fatal sentence.
 I fell before the throne, extoll'd his justice;
 Then, with feign'd tears, and well-dissembled speech,
 Charg'd thee with violation of my honour,
 And murder of a husband. He was mov'd;
 Pleas'd with my bold request, he heard my prayer,
 And for revenge and justice gave me this.

[*Shows the dagger.*]

But the time flies. I come, my lord, to save thee.
 'Tis by that hope, I live.

Soph. That hope is past:
 It is impossible. Resentment, power,
 And perjury, all work against my life.
 O how I fear to die! for thee, I fear;
 To leave thee thus expos'd, a helpless captive,
 In a strange land, and not one friend to cheer thee!

Cyl. I think thou lov'st me.

Soph. Sure thou long hast known it.

Cyl. Is there ought that I could deny *Sophernes*?
 No. I have try'd my heart!

Soph. What mean these doubts?
I never gave you cause.

Cyl. Then promise, swear,
That you will not refuse me what I ask;
Thus on her knees *Cylene* begs it of you.

Soph. Does this appear like love? speak, and 'tis granted.

Cyl. I thank thee. Thou hast given me all my wishes,

For now thy life is safe; and sav'd by me.
Here, take this veil; this shall secure thy flight,
With this thou shalt deceive the watchful guard.
O blest occasion! fly, my lord, with speed;
I never wish'd to part till now.

Soph. What, go and leave thee thus! my heart forbids it.

No. Death is all that I am doom'd to suffer;
But thy distress is more.

Cyl. Dispute it not.
Hast thou not sworn?

Soph. What never can be done.
Why wilt thou force severer torture on me?
No. Give me death; I chuse the slighter pain.
When I am dead, may the just Gods relieve thee.

Cyl. Was ever love thus obstinately cruel!
Only thy life can save me; think on that.

[*Sophernes fixes his eyes on the ground.*]

Like the deaf rock he stands immoveable.
How my fears grow, and chill my shivering heart!
Has then thy stubbornness resolv'd to kill me?

Soph. Shall I, that was her shield in every danger,
Abandon her to the rude hand of power?

Cyl. Hear me, my lord; embrace the happy moment:

This is, perhaps, the last that is allow'd us.

Soph. What! give her my distress!

Cyl. Look up, and answer.

Have my words lost all int'rest in thy heart?
Hear then my purpose; and I will perform it.
I'll never feel the pang of that sad hour
When thou shalt suffer. No: I'll die before thee.
How gracious was this present of the king.

'Tis kind, 'tis merciful, 'twill give me peace,
And show me more compassion than *Sopbernes*.

Soph. O give me strength, ye powers, to break my chains,

That I may force the lifted weapon from her!
Spare, spare thy dearer life! I grant thee all.
I will abandon thee to my distresses;
I'll fly this instant; by our loves, I will.
The Gods are kind. O may their mercy save her!

Cyl. From thy dear hands I take the galling chains,
Lest danger intercept thee: haste, be gone;
And as thou valuest mine, secure thy life.
Thou hadst no hope: who knows but my offence
May find forgiveness! 'tis a crime of love;
And love's a powerful advocate to mercy.

Soph. O how I struggle to unloose my heart-strings,
That are so closely knit and twin'd with thine!
Is't possible that we may meet again?
That thought has fill'd my soul with resolution.
Farewell: may heaven support thee, and redress us!

[*Exit.*]

Cyl. O blessed opportunity, I thank thee.
If for this pious act of love I perish,
Let not *Sopbernes* rashly follow me.
Live to revenge me, and the world shall praise thee.
Though all my hours be doom'd to chains and darkness,
The pleasing thought that I have given thee safety,
Will cheer me more than liberty and day-light.
Though I'm condemned to suffer shameful death,
Ev'n in that hour I shall forget his terrors,
And knowing that preserv'd thee, die with pleasure.
But hark! what noise was that? New fears alarm me.
Is he detected?—Heaven has more compassion.
Be still, my heart. I go to take his place,
And wait th' event with steady resignation.

[*Enters the dungeon.*]

Enter Araxes and Astarbe.

Ast. I bring the royal mandate, read your order.
The sentence of *Sopbernes* is suspended;
I'd question him in private. Guide me to him.

Ara. He's dead.

Asp. Sopbernes dead ! when ? how ? by whom ?

Ara. The captive woman by whose hand he fell,
Is gone before the king ; just now she parted.

Asp. My guilt, my hate, my love, all war within,
And conscience and distraction will betray me. [*Aside.*

Ara. Within that dungeon lies the breathless body.

Asp. Name him no more. Begone ; I'd be alone.
You know my pleasure.

Ara. I'm all obedience.

[*Exit.*

Asp. Who shall appease this tempest of my soul ?

'Tis done. He's dead : now it will rage for ever !

Yet why ? Hence, conscience. All I did was justice.

Am I the cause ? I proffer'd life and love ;

The murder was not mine. Why then this horror ?

Could a queen bear such insolence and scorn ?

Was I not injur'd ? shall I not resent ?

He well deserv'd his fate. Ungrateful man !

The bloody spectacle shall please revenge,

And fix eternal hatred in my heart. [*Cylene comes forth.*

Hah ! speak : what art ?——

It moves ! it comes ! where shall I hide me from it ?

Nature shrinks back, and shivers at the sight.

[*Hides her face.*

Cyl. See at your feet a poor unhappy captive.

[*Kneeling,*

O may the queen be gracious to her servant !

Asp. Araxes said that he had let you forth,

And by command you went before the king.

Why has he thus deceiv'd me ?

Cyl. Turn not away ;

Bestow one look of pity on a wretch,

Who lifts her eyes to you for grace and pardon.

Asp. Pardon ! for what ? you did it by command.

Is it a crime t'obey the voice of justice ?

And did not thy own wrongs demand his blood ?

What has detain'd thee in that horrid place ?

Was it to hear him in the pangs of death,

And taste the pleasure of his dying groan ?

Stretch forth thy hands : where are the crimson stains ?

Where lies the reeking sword ? Is he yet cold ?

'Twas bravely done.—Go, haste, before the throne ;

Phraortes shall reward thee for this service.

Cyl. When I shall stand before that awful presence,
How shall I stem the torrent of his wrath!
Then let the queen instill soft mercy in him,
And intercede to spare a wretched wife.

Ast. Make known thy crime.

Cyl. All my offence is love.

Sophernes is my husband.

Ast. Hast thou kill'd him?

Cyl. No. I dar'd disobey. My love has sav'd him.
With lying speeches I deceiv'd the king,
Accused *Sophernes* of imagined crimes,
And thus have given him life. My veil conceal'd him,
And brought him forth from death. This is my guilt.
If e'er your heart has felt the tender passion,
You will forgive this just, this pious fraud.
Who would not do the same for him she loves?
Consult thy heart; and pity will plead for me.

Ast. How dar'd you contradict the king's command?

Cyl. No power on earth commands the heart but
love; [Rises.

And I obey'd my heart.

Ast. Thy life is forfeit.

Dar'st thou avow thy crime?

Cyl. I glory in it.

If 'tis a crime, when innocence is wrong'd
To snatch it from the rage of credulous power;
If 'tis a crime to succour the distressed;
If 'tis a crime to relieve injur'd virtue;
If 'tis a crime to be a faithful wife;
Those crimes are mine; for I have sav'd my husband.

Ast. Is this an answer turn'd to move compassion!

Such insolence is only match'd in him.

Thine is the most consummate pitch of treason.

Who gave thee power? Are traitors at thy mercy?

Let not hope flatter thee. Nor prayers nor tears

Shall turn away the sword of justice from thee.

Rash woman, know, thy life shall pay his ransom.

Cyl. Alas! my life is of too little price;

Such as it is, I freely give it for him.

May safety guard his days, and watch his nights!

[Kneeling.

May ev'ry sun rise happier than the last,

'Till he shall re-ascend his native throne !
Then think upon *Cylene*. Heaven shall aid thee
To punish *Media* for thy murder'd wife.

Ast. Araxes ! [*Enter Araxes.*] Seize this bold presumptuous woman.

Your charge, beneath her veil, is fled from justice,
And she dares own the crime. I fear your duty
Will be suspected. Lead her to the dungeon.
There wait thy fate.

Cyl. Ye gods, preserve *Sophernes*.

[*She is lock'd into the dungeon.*]

Ast. If I had power, this instant she should die.

Ara. I fear the king will soften into mercy.

Ast. Why that suspicion ?

Ara. While she spoke before him,
I saw the king with the most fond attention
Hang on her words ; and as she spoke, he languish'd,
And ev'ry look he gave was love or pity.

Ast. She shall not live an hour. Left with each moment

His passion strengthen, and my power diminish.

Did beauty strike all hearts as well as eyes,

For me the rival world would be in arms :

Beauty's admir'd and prais'd, not always lov'd.

Some eyes are dazzled with too strong a lustre,

That gaze with pleasure on a fainter object ;

This homely captive then may steal his heart,

And bring disgrace upon me. I'll prevent her.

This hour I'll see her bleed, and thus remove

At once the rival of my throne and love.



ACT V.

SCENE, a Temple.

ASTARBE.

*D*Oraspe knows,—and I am in her power.

Araxes was employ'd ; he may suspect me.

One crime supports another—I must on.

I fear them both. How shall I lose my fear ?

THE CAPTIVES.

Their deaths must end it. But they may be honest.
 I'll sift them—for my soul has lost all rest.
 But see *Doraspe*.

Enter Doraspe.

Thou sometimes wert known
 To miss devotion's hours. How comes it then
 Thou'rt now so soon? hast thou ought that concerns me?
 Think'st thou *Araxes* honest? I have doubts.
 I fear the prisoner 'scap'd by his connivance.
 Are my commands obey'd?

Dor. 'Tis not yet done.

He could not gain admission to the king.

Asp. Does he not know a frown of mine can crush
 him?

Dor. I know his heart and hand are wholly your's.
 He waits the king's commands.

Asp. Are mine then nothing?

And want I power to justify the deed?
 Why was she not dispatch'd? He knew my pleasure.
 My pleasure is his duty. 'Twas I rais'd him;
 And dares he now dispute what I ordain?
 Tell him, I'll have it done; that I command it.
 Thou too art false. Then on herself alone
Asarbe shall depend. Away, thou flatterer.
 Go hence, and tremble at the queen's displeasure.
 She shall this instant die. For see *Phraortes*.
Asarbe now has all things at her nod.
 Of this day's worship I'll appoint the victim.

Enter Phraortes; A solemn procession of Priests.

[*The queen talks apart to Phraortes.*]

Phra. Bid them suspend a while the sacrifice;
 The queen requires a private conference
 On matters that concern the state. Withdraw.

[*Exeunt Priests.*]

Now speak, my queen; I'm ready to obey.

Asp. All is not safe. Your state still harbours treason.
 Ev'n now I tremble for my lord the king;
 For through the dark the traitor's arrow flies;
 And which way will you turn your shield against it?

Phra. What means my queen?

Asp. Cast off all clemency;

So shall your throne stand firm to latest time.

Pbra. And has my danger given *Astarbe* fear?
Where shall I find reward for so much goodness?
I swear by *Jove*, and yon wide sapphire heaven,
Astarbe's will shall fix the king's decree.

Ast. What shall be done to him, whose lying lips
Mislead the king from the strait paths of justice?

Pbra. *Media* decrees that death shall be his portion.

Ast. What is ordain'd for him, who (when the king
Entrusts the royal signet in his hands)
Dares contradict the sacred mandate?

Pbra. Death.

Ast. What shall our laws inflict on that bold miscreant,
Who saves th'offender whom the king condemns?

Pbra. The fatal sentence falls upon his head.

Ast. Let justice then support the throne of *Media*;
Let justice then preserve thy sacred life!

All these offences are that captive woman's,
Who with feign'd tears beg'd pity and revenge.
With lying lips she fell before the throne,
She turn'd the king from the strait paths of justice,
The royal seal was trusted in her hands;
Presumptuously she broke the sacred mandate,
She spar'd whom you condemn'd, and with vile treachery

Hath set *Sapbernes* free. So this assassin
Shall kindle new rebellions in your empire.

Pbra. These flagrant crimes demand immediate death.

Ast. Let it be so. The king is wise and just.

Pbra. She shall this instant bleed. Audacious woman!

Ast. Let her endure the shameful pomp of death,
Expose her through the city's public street;
So shall your people's shouts extol your justice;
So shall you strike your enemies with fear,
And awe them to subjection. Bring her forth;
Here let her bleed, ev'n on this holy ground,
Before the presence; *Jove* delights in justice,
The righteous sacrifice shall please the gods.

Enter Orbasius, Magi, Attendants.

Pbra. Come from the croud, *Orbasius*; hear and obey!
Haste to the prison, and bring forth that woman

(Who freed *Sophernes* from the hand of power)
To public justice. She shall bleed before me.
Let her be led a public spectacle.

Dispatch. Remember that the king expects you.

[*Exit Orbasius.*]

The shield of heaven has turn'd destruction from us;
And gratitude requires our thanks and praise.
Call up the priests. Begin the sacred rites.

1st Mag. Turn all your eyes to yon bright arch of
heaven.

2d Mag. When *Jove* in thunder threatens impious men,
May the red lightnings scatter *Media's* foes,
And lay their cities desolate and waste!

1st Mag. May the vast globe of inexhausted light,
That rolls its living fires from east to west,
Strow all his paths with fragrant herbs and flowers,
And bless his people with perpetual spring!

2d Mag. May the bright lamp of night, the silver
moon,

And all the starry myriad that attend her,
Guard and defend his midnight couch from dangers!

1st Mag. May ever living springs supply our fountains,
And wind in fertile rivers through the land!

2d Mag. Bless him, ye winds, with ever prosp'rous
gales!

1st Mag. Pour not your wrath in tempests on his
people.

Let your sweet breath chase dearth and pestilence,
And cool our summers with eternal health!

Enter Orbasius, with Cylene, as led to execution.

[*Orbasius talks apart to the king.*]

Pbra. Again we must defer the solemn worship.
Bid the procession move towards the temple:
And let th' offender stand before the presence. [*To Orb.*]

Ast. *Sophernes* has expos'd me to this woman;
And while she lives, I live in fear and shame.
Shall she then triumph in a queen's disgrace? [*Aside.*]

Cyl. Most gracious king, consider my transgression.
[*Kneels.*]

My life is forfeit; justice has condemn'd me.
I broke th'inviolable laws of *Media*.

Yet let *Pbraortes* with impartial scale
Weigh my offence; he'll find my crime was virtue.
Sure heaven that tries the heart, will pardon me:
And kings, who imitate the gods in justice,
Should not forsake them in the paths of mercy.

Pbra. Have not thy lying lips deceiv'd the king?
How shall thy words find faith! They're air, they're
nothing!

Cyl. O be not rash in judgment! Hear me speak.
What mov'd my tongue to practise this deceit?
Was it ambition and the lust of power?
Was it to vex your empire with rebellion?
Was it the meaner views of sordid gain?
Was it to hurt the lowest of your people?
All my offence is faithful love and duty:
Sophernes is my husband, and I lov'd him.

Pbra. Thy husband!

Ast. Hear her not: woman, away.
Remember you have sworn.

Pbra. Thy husband, say'st thou?

Ast. Think on your oath, and spurn dissimulation.

Pbra. Am I debarr'd the chief delight of kings?
Have I the power to punish; not to pardon?
But I have sworn.

Cyl. If there's no room for mercy *Rises.*
My life is well bestow'd. My death is glorious;
I chose it; and repine not at my fate.

Ast. Turn from her. Listen not to fraud and guile.

Cyl. Think not I shudder at th'approach of death;
That the keen sword, which glitters in my eyes,
Makes my heart fail, and sinks me to despair.
I fear not for myself; for him I fear.

How will he bear my death?—As I could his.

Pbra. Why have I bound the tender hands of mercy?
[*Musing.*

Ast. You but delay. The royal oath is sacred.

Cyl. Well then. Lead on. His punishment is mine.
Live, live, *Sophernes*, and forget *Cylene*;
Lest grief destroy thy peace, and make thee wretched.
I'm ready.

Pbra. How shall I pronounce the sentence!

Ast. For your oath's sake.

Pbra. 'Tis granted. Let her die.

But let me first perform my due devotions,
To beg that mercy which I must refuse.
As soon as I have paid my solemn vows,
I'll make the sign: then let the blow be given.
See all be ready. Now renew the rites.

Enter Hydarnes, disguis'd.

Hyd. Thus far I'm undiscover'd.—Now's my time.
The king of *Medin's* given into my hands.
And when he leaves his guards to trust the gods,
Ev'n while he prostrate falls, and lifts his eyes
To the bright god of day, th'all-seeing sun,
This shall dispatch him first, and then *Hydarnes*.

1st Mag. Now let the king advance.

Phra. O glorious sun!

[*Kneeling.*

[*Hydarnes attempting to stab Phraortes, is stab'd by
Sopernes, disguis'd, who is seiz'd by the Magi.*

What means this consternation in all eyes?
Whence this alarm, and all this wild disorder?
Hah! who lies here thus weltring in his blood,
Gasping for life? what means this horrid murder?
Strike not till I command, [*To the Executioner.*] Who
did this deed?

1st Mag. Behold the man. What bounty can
reward him?

What shall be done for him who sav'd the king?

Phra. Say who, and whence thou art?

Soph. A wretched man

Who comes to take his sentence on him, death.

Sopernes was condemn'd; 'tis he must suffer.

Spare then that pattern of heroic virtue.

The sentence is not her's; I claim my right.

Sopernes stands before you, and demands it.

[*Throws off his disguise.*

Cyl. O stay not for the signal. Give the blow.
Save him, ye gods! Why is the stroke delay'd?
The king has sworn. O may my death preserve him!

Phra. Suspend her sentence till my further orders.
Who slew this man? what mov'd thee to the murder?
Why hast thou stain'd this holy place with blood?

Soph. That villain who lies groveling there before thee,
Had rais'd his arm to take thy life, O king;
And as the point descended, in the moment.

I laid him low; and heaven has done me justice.
If favour shall reward me for this deed,
Spare my *Cylene*, grant her your protection.
I ask not life, for without her 'tis nothing.

Asp. Where will this end? How are my schemes
destroy'd!

Fear chills my heart, and guilt lies heavy on me.
Leave me not, hell! desert not now thy cause.
I've gone too far. O blind the eyes of justice!
And sink me not in ruin and perdition.

[*Aside.*

Pbra. Know you this bold assassin? View him well.

Hyd. Ay, gaze upon me.

Orba. Sure I've seen this man.

Soph. Among the crowd I mark'd this perjur'd wretch,
Who charg'd me with ingratitude and treason:
With fury in his looks, and hasty strides
He steps before me; straight he rais'd his dagger:
In justice to myself and thee, I smote him.

Asp. Where shall I hide me? how my fears distract me!
Who knows the torment of the guilty wretch,
When accusation stares him in the face?
Then all our spirits sink into despair,
And when we want most strength, then most it fails us.
He speaks, and I'm betray'd. Why err'd the dagger!
To bring confusion, shame, and death upon me.
Where shall I fly?—for conscience will detect me,
'Twill falter on my tongue, and stain my cheek.
O horror! O disgrace!—I fly from shame.

[*Exit.*

Soph. 'Twas I that gave thee death.

Hyd. Thou hast done justice.

Pbra. What sayest thou? speak again.

Hyd. He has done justice.

I barb'rously accus'd him of my crimes;

That guilt upbraids me; and I ask forgiveness. [*To Soph.*

Pbra. Whence art thou?—why this zealous rage
against me?

Hyd. I grieve not that I perish'd by his hand;
But that he disappointed my revenge,
I can't forgive him. Had he stay'd 'till then,
Hydarnes had slain greatly. But that's past.
Still I shall wound thee in the tenderest part.

[*To Phruortes.*

I faint. O grant me strength to give it utterance!

Draw near, *Araxes*. Speak, inform the king;
Did not you guide me to the queen's apartment?
You know why I was call'd. Disclose the secret.

Ara. What past I know not.

Hyd. What you fear to own,
I dare reveal: hear then a dying man.
The queen, on promise of my life and pardon,
Prevail'd upon me to accuse this prince:
I knew him not; yet, to pursue thy life,
And gratify revenge, I undertook it.

Phra. It is impossible. Advance, my queen,
And let thy presence strike him with confusion.
Come forth, *Astarbe*. Hah! she's fled; she's guilty!
Haste, bring her back, I will extort confession.
What mov'd her to this perjur'd information?

[*Ex. Officers.*

Whence sprung this hate and malice to *Sophernes*?

[*To Hydarnes.*

Hyd. Ask her. I speak the truth, and know no further.
Look on me, tyrant, and observe my features;
Sce'st thou not here the lines of brave *Lyfarnes*?
He by thy power was led to shameful death,
His son now dies, and never has reveng'd him. [*Dies.*

Enter Astarbe, brought in by Officers.

Ast. Bring me before the king.

Phra. Perfidious woman!

Look on that wretch, who there lies pale and cold;
Was he not brought in private to your chamber?
Who gave instructions to accuse *Sophernes*?
Who promis'd life and pardon to *Hydarnes*?

Ast. All then is lost. *Astarbe* is betray'd.
But shall I stoop to lead a life of shame?
No. This shall close a scene of long remorse.

[*Stabs herself.*

Phra. *Astarbe*! hold!

Ast. Forgive me!

[*Dies.*

Phra. Her soul treachery
My soul detests. But love will force a tear.
What mov'd her hatred thus against your life?

Soph. She was unhappy. Let her be forgot.

Phra. Draw near, *Cylene*. May heav'n bless your loves!

[*Gives her to Sophernes.*

Cyl. Shall he then live? My heart o'erflows with joy.
Now life is worth accepting, worth desiring,
Worth ev'ry wish, and ev'ry daily prayer.

Pbra. By you the royal vestment shall be worn,
And, next the king, all honour shall be paid
To you who sav'd him. [To Sophernes.

Soph. What I did was due;
I've only paid a debt of gratitude:
What would your bounty more?—you've given me all:
For in these arms I ev'ry wish possess.

Pbra. Life is a voyage, and we with pain and labour
Must weather many a storm, to reach the port.

Soph. Since 'tis not given to mortals to discern
Their real good and ill; let men learn patience:
Let us the toils of adverse fate sustain,
For through that rugged road our hopes we gain.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. OLDFIELD.

SHALL authors tease the town with tragic passion,
When we've more modern moral things in fashion?
Let poets quite exhaust the Muse's treasure;
Sure masquerades must give more feeling pleasure,
Where we meet finer sense and better measure;
The marry'd dame, whose business must be done,
Puts on the holy vestments of a nun;
And brings her unprolific spouse a son.
Coquettes, with whom no lover could succeed,
Here pay off all arrears, and love in—deed:
Ev'n conscious prudes are so sincere and free,
They ask each man they meet—Do you know me?

Do not our Operas unbend the mind,
Where ev'ry soul's to ecstacy refin'd?
Entranc'd with sound fits each seraphic toast:
All ladies love the play that moves the most.
Ev'n in this house I've known some tender Fair,
Touch'd with meer sense alone, confess a tear.
But the soft voice of an Italian Wether,
Makes them all languish three whole hours together.
And where's the wonder? Plays, like Mass, are sung,
(Religious Drama!)—in an unknown tongue.

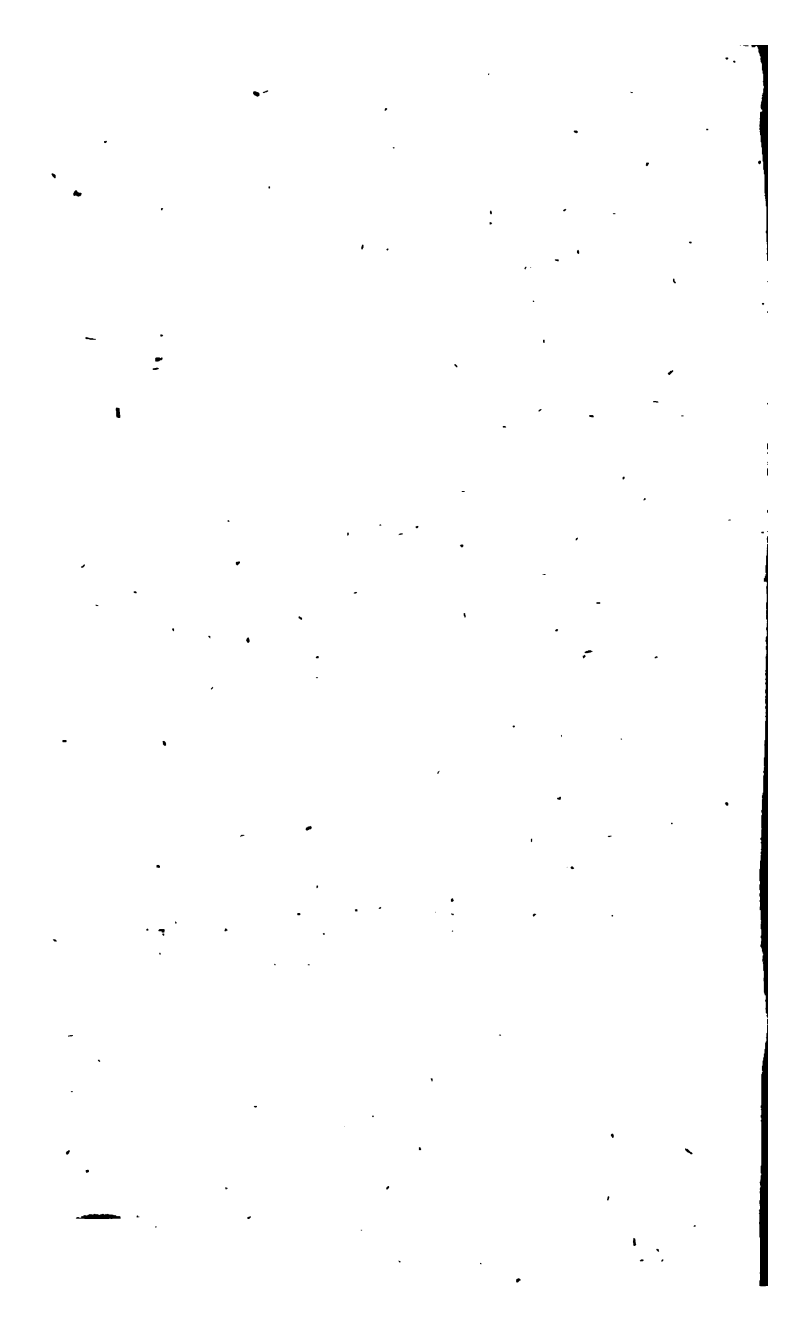
Will Poets ne'er consider what they cost us?
What tragedy can take, like Doctor Faustus?
Two stages in this moral show excell,
To frighten vicious youth with scenes of hell;
Yet both these Faustuses can warn but few.
For what's a conjurer's fate to me or—you?

Yet there are wives who think heav'n worth their care;
But first they kindly send their spouses there.
When you my lover's last distress behold,
Does not each husband's thrilling blood run cold?
Some heroes only die.—Ours finds a wife.
What's harder than captivity for life?
Yet Men, ne'er warn'd, still court their own undoing:
Who, for that circle, would but venture ruin?

T H E

BEGGAR'S OPERA.

—Nos hæc novissimus esse nihil. **MART.**



INTRODUCTION.

BEGGAR, PLAYER,

BEGGAR.

IF poverty be a title to poetry, I am sure no body can dispute mine. I own myself of the Company of Beggars; and I make one at their weekly festivals at *St. Giles's*. I have a small yearly salary for my catches, and am welcome to a dinner there whenever I please, which is more than most poets can say.

Player. As we live by the Muses, it is but gratitude in us to encourage poetical merit wherever we find it. The Muses, contrary to all other ladies, pay no distinction to dress, and never partially mistake the pertness of embroidery for wit, nor the modesty of want for dulness. Be the author who he will, we push his play as far as it will go. So (though you are in want) I wish you success heartily.

Beggar. This piece I own was originally writ for the celebrating the marriage of *James Chanter* and *Moll Lay*, two most excellent ballad-singers. I have introduced the similes that are in all your celebrated opera's: *The Swallow*, the *Moth*, the *Bee*, the *Ship*, the *Flower*, &c. Besides I have a prison scene, which the ladies always reckon charmingly pathetic. As to the parts, I have observed such a nice impartiality to our two ladies, that it is impossible for either of them to take offence. I hope I may be forgiven, that I have not made my opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue; for I have no recitative; excepting this, as I have consented to have neither Prologue nor Epilogue, it must be allowed an opera in all its forms. The piece indeed hath been heretofore frequently represented by ourselves in our great room at *St. Giles's*, so that I cannot too often acknowledge your charity in bringing it now on the stage.

Player. But I see it is time for us to withdraw; the Actors are preparing to begin. Play away the overture.

[*Exeunt.*]

Filch. Tom Gagg, sir, is found guilty.

Peach. A lazy dog! When I took him the time before, I told him what he would come to if he did not mend his hand. This is death without reprieve. I may venture to book him *[writes]* for Tom Gagg, forty pounds. Let Betty Sly know that I'll save her from transportation, for I can get more by her staying in England.

Filch. Betty hath brought more goods into our lock this year than any five of the gang; and in truth, 'tis pity to lose so good a customer.

Peach. If none of the gang takes her off, she may, in the common course of business, live a twelve-month longer. I love to let women 'scape. A good sportsman always lets the hen-partridges fly, because the breed of the game depends upon them. Besides, here the law allows us no reward: there is nothing to be got by the death of women — except our wives.

Filch. Without dispute, she is a fine woman! 'Twas to her I was obliged for my education, (to say a bold word) she hath train'd up more young fellows to the business, than the gaming-table.

Peach. Truly, *Filch*, thy observation is right. We and the surgeons are more beholden to women, than all the professions besides.

AIR II. The bonny grey-ey'd morn, &c.

Filch. 'Tis woman that seduces all mankind,

*By her we first were taught the wheedling arts;
Her very eyes can cheat; when most she's kind,
She tricks us of our money with our hearts.
For her, like wolves by night we roam for prey,
And practise ev'ry fraud to bribe her charms;
For suits of love, like law, are won by pay,
And beauty must be see'd into our arms.*

Peach. But make haste to Newgate, boy, and let my friends know what I intend; for I love to make them easy one way or other.

Filch. When a gentleman is long kept in suspense, penitence may break his spirit ever after. Besides, certainty gives a man a good air upon his trial, and makes him risque another without fear or scruple. But I'll

away, for 'tis a pleasure to be the messenger of comfort to friends in affliction. [Exit.]

Peach. But 'tis now high time to look about me for a decent execution against next sessions. I hate a lazy rogue, by whom one can get nothing 'till he is hang'd. A register of the gang [reading.] Crook-finger'd *Jack*. A year and a half in the service: Let me see how much the flock owes to his industry; one, two, three, four, five gold watches, and seven silver ones. A mighty clean-handed fellow! Sixteen snuff-boxes, five of them of true gold. Six dozen of handkerchiefs, four silver-hilted swords, half a dozen of shirts, three tye-periwigs, and a piece of broad cloth. Considering these are only the fruits of his leisure hours, I don't know a prettier fellow, for no man alive hath a more engaging presence of mind upon the road. *Wat Dreary*, alias *Brown Will*, an irregular dog, who hath an underhand way of disposing his goods. I'll try him only for a sessions or two longer upon his good behaviour. *Harry Paddington*, a poor petty-larceny rascal, without the least genius; that fellow, tho' he were to live these six months, will never come to the gallows with any credit. Slippery *Sam*; he goes off the next sessions, for the villain hath the impudence to have views of following his trade as a taylor, which he calls an honest employment. *Mat. of the Mint*; lifted not above a month ago, a promising sturdy fellow, and diligent in his way; somewhat too bold and hasty, and may raise good contributions on the public, if he does not cut himself short by murder. *Tom Tiddle*, a guzzling soaking sot, who is always too drunk to stand himself, or to make others stand. A cart is absolutely necessary for him. *Robin of Bagshot*, alias *Gorgon*, alias *Bluff Bob*, alias *Carbuncle*, alias *Bob Booty*.

Enter Mrs. Peachum.

Mrs. Peach. What of *Bob Booty*, husband? I hope nothing bad hath betided him. You know, my dear, he's a favourite customer of mine. 'Twas he made me a present of this ring.

Peach. I have set his name down in the black-list, that's all, my dear; he spends his life among women,

78 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

and as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward, and there's forty pounds lost to us for ever.

Mrs. *Peach*. You know, my dear, I never meddle in matters of death; I always leave those affairs to you. Women indeed are bitter bad judges in these cases, for they are so partial to the brave, that they think every man handsome who is going to the camp or the gallows.

AIR III. Cold and raw, &c.

*If any wench Venus's girdle wear,
Though she be never so ugly,
Lillies and roses will quickly appear,
And her face look wond'rous smugly.
Beneath the left ear, so fit but a cord,
(A rope so charming a zone is!)
The youth in his cart bath the air of a lord;
And we cry, There dies an Adonis!*

But really, husband, you should not be too hard-hearted, for you never had a finer, braver set of men than at present. We have not had a murder among them all, these seven months. And truly, my dear, that is a great blessing.

Peach. What a dickens is the woman always a whimpering about murder for? No gentleman is ever look'd upon the worse for killing a man in his own defence; and if business cannot be carried on without it, what would you have a gentleman do?

Mrs. *Peach*. If I am in the wrong, my dear, you must excuse me, for no-body can help the frailty of an over-scrupulous conscience.

Peach. Murder is as fashionable a crime as a man can be guilty of. How many fine gentlemen have we in *Newgate* every year, purely upon that article? If they have wherewithal to persuade the jury to bring it in manslaughter, what are they the worse for it? So, my dear, have done upon this subject. Was captain *Macbeath* here this morning, for the bank-notes he left with you last week?

Mrs. *Peach*. Yes, my dear; and though the Bank hath stop't payment, he was so chearful and so agreeable! Sure there is not a finer gentleman upon the

road than the captain! If he comes from *Bagshot* at any reasonable hour, he hath promis'd to make one this evening with *Polly*, me, and *Bob Booty*, at a party of quadrille. Pray, my dear, is the captain rich?

Peach. The captain keeps too good company ever to grow rich. *Marybone* and the chocolate-houses are his undoing. The man that proposes to get money by play, should have the education of a fine gentleman, and be train'd up to it from his youth.

Mrs. Peach. Really I am sorry upon *Polly's* account, the captain hath not more discretion. What business hath he to keep company with lords and gentlemen? he should leave them to prey upon one another.

Peach. Upon *Polly's* account! What, a plague, does the woman mean?—Upon *Polly's* account!

Mrs. Peach. Captain *Macheath* is very fond of the girl.

Peach. And what then?

Mrs. Peach. If I have any skill in the ways of women, I am sure *Polly* thinks him a very pretty man.

Peach. And what then? you would not be so mad to have the wench marry him! Gamesters and highwaymen are generally very good to their whores, but they are very devils to their wives.

Mrs. Peach. But if *Polly* should be in love, how should we help her, or how can she help herself? Poor girl, I'm in the utmost concern about her.

AIR IV. Why is your faithful slave disdain'd?

If love the virgin's heart invade,

How, like a moth, the simple maid

Still plays about the flame!

If soon she be not made a wife,

Her honour's sing'd, and then for life,

She's—what I dare not name.

Peach. Look ye, wife. A handsome wench, in our way of business, is as profitable as at the bar of a *Temple* coffee-house, who looks upon it as her livelihood to grant every liberty but one. You see I would indulge the girl as far as prudently we can, in any thing, but marriage! After that, my dear, how shall we be safe? are we not then in her husband's power? for a husband hath the absolute power over all

80 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

a wife's secrets, but her own. If the girl had the discretion of a court lady, who can have a dozen young fellows at her ear, without complying with one, I should not matter it; but *Polly* is tinder, and a spark will at once set her on a flame. Married! If the wench does not know her own profit, sure she knows her own pleasure better than to make herself a property! My daughter to me should be like a court lady to a minister of state, a key to the whole gang. Married! If the affair is not already done, I'll terrify her from it, by the example of our neighbours.

Mrs. Peach. May-hap, my dear, you may injure the girl. She loves to imitate the fine ladies, and she may only allow the captain liberties in the view of interest.

Peach. But 'tis your duty, my dear, to warn the girl against her ruin, and to instruct her how to make the most of her beauty. I'll go to her this moment, and fift her. In the mean time, wife, rip out the coronets and marks of these dozen of cambric handkerchiefs, for I can dispose of them this afternoon to a chap in the city. [Exit.

Mrs. Peach. Never was a man more out of the way in an argument, than my husband! Why must our *Polly*, forsooth, differ from her sex, and love only her husband? And why must our *Polly's* marriage, contrary to all observation, make her the less follow'd by other men? All men are thieves in love, and like a woman the better for being another's property.

AIR V. Of all the simple things we do, &c.

*A maid is like the golden ore,
Which bath guineas intrinsical in't,
Whose worth is never known, before
It is try'd and imprest in the mint.
A wife's like a guinea in gold,
Stamp'd with the name of her spouse;
Now here, now there; is bought, or is sold;
And is current in every house.*

Enter Filch.

Mrs. Peach. Come hither, *Filch*. I am as fond of this child as though my mind misgave me he were my own. He hath as fine a hand at picking a pocket as a woman,

and is as nimble-finger'd as a juggler. If an unlucky fession does not cut the rope of thy life, I pronounce, boy, thou wilt be a great man in history. Where was your post last night, my boy?

Filch. I ply'd at the Opera, madam; and considering 'twas neither dark nor rainy, so that there was no great hurry in getting chairs and coaches, made a tolerable hand on't. These seven handkerchiefs, madam.

Mrs. Peach. Colour'd ones, I see. They are of sure sale from our warehouse at *Redriff* among the seamen.

Filch. And this snuff-box.

Mrs. Peach. Set in gold! A pretty encouragement this to a young beginner.

Filch. I had a fair tug at a charming gold watch. Pox take the taylors for making the fobs so deep and narrow! It stuck by the way, and I was forced to make my escape under a coach. Really, madam, I fear I shall be cut off in the flower of my youth, so that every now and then (since I was pumpt) I have thoughts of taking up and going to sea.

Mrs. Peach. You should go to *Hockley in the hole*, and to *Marybone*, child, to learn valour. These are the schools that have bred so many brave men. I thought, boy, by this time, thou hadst lost fear as well as shame. Poor lad! how little does he know yet of the *Old Bailey*! For the first fact I'll insure thee from being hang'd; and going to sea, *Filch*, will come time enough upon a sentence of transportation. But now, since you have nothing better to do, ev'n go to your book, and learn your catechism; for really a man makes but an ill figure in the ordinary's paper, who cannot give a satisfactory answer to his questions. But, hark you, my lad, Don't tell me a lye; for you know I hate a liar. Do you know of any thing that hath past between captain *Macbeath* and our *Polly*?

Filch. I beg you, madam, don't ask me; for I must either tell a lye to you, or to miss *Polly*; for I promised her I would not tell.

Mrs. Peach. But when the honour of our family is concern'd—

Filch. I shall lead a sad life with Miss *Polly*, if ever she comes to know I told you. Besides, I would not

willingly forfeit my own honour by betraying any body.

Mrs. Peach. Yonder comes my husband and Polly. Come, Filch, you shall go with me into my own room, and tell me the whole story. I'll give thee a glass of a most delicious cordial that I keep for my own drinking.
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Peachum and Polly.

Polly. I know as well as any of the fine ladies how to make the most of myself and of my man too. A woman knows how to be mercenary, though she hath never been in a court or at an assembly. We have it in our natures, papa. If I allow captain Macbeath some trifling liberties, I have this watch and other visible marks of his favour to show for it. A girl who cannot grant some things, and refuse what is most material, will make but a poor hand of her beauty, and soon be thrown upon the common.

AIR VI. What shall I do to show how much I love her?

*Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre,
Which in the garden enamels the ground!
Near it the bees in play flutter and cluster,
And gaudy butterflies frolick around.
But, when once pluck'd, 'tis no longer alluring,
To Covent-garden 'tis sent, (as yet sweet)
There fades, and shrinks, and grows past all en-
during,
Rots, stinks, and dies, and is trod under feet.*

Peach. You know, Polly, I am not against your toying and trifling with a customer in the way of business, or to get out a secret, or so. But if I find out that you have play'd the fool and are married, you jade you, I'll cut your throat, huffy. Now you know my mind.

Enter Mrs. Peachum.

AIR VII. O London is a fine Town.

Mrs. Peachum, [*in a very great passion.*]

Our Polly is a sad slut! nor heeds what we have taught her.

I wonder any man alive will ever rear a daughter!

*For she must have both hoods and gowns, and hoops to
 swell her pride,
 With scarfs and stays, and gloves and lace; and she will
 have men beside;
 And when she's drest with care and cost, all-tempting,
 fine and gay,
 As men should serve a cucumber, she flings herself away.*

You baggage! you hussy! you inconsiderate jade! had you been hang'd, it would not have vex'd me, for that might have been your misfortune; but to do such a mad thing by choice! The wench is married, husband.

Peach. Married? the captain is a bold man, and will risque any thing for money; to be sure he believes her a fortune. Do you think your mother and I should have liv'd comfortably so long together, if ever we had been married? Baggage!

Mrs. Peach. I knew she was always a proud slut; and now the wench hath play'd the fool and married, because forsooth she would do like the gentry. Can you support the expence of a husband, hussy, in gaming, drinking, and whoring? have you money enough to carry on the daily quarrels of man and wife about who shall squander most? There are not many husbands and wives, who can bear the charges of plaguing one another in a handsome way. If you must be married, could you introduce no-body into our family but a highwayman? Why, thou foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill us'd, and as much neglected, as if thou hadst married a lord!

Peach. Let not your anger, my dear, break through the rules of decency, for the captain looks upon himself in the military capacity, as a gentleman by his profession. Besides what he hath already, I know he is in a fair way of getting, or of dying; and both these ways, let me tell you, are most excellent chances for a wife. Tell me, hussy, are you ruin'd, or no?

Mrs. Peach. With Polly's fortune, she might very well have gone off to a person of distinction. Yes, that you might, you pouting slut!

Peach. What, is the wench dumb? Speak, or I'll make you plead by squeezing out an answer from you.

84 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Are you really bound wife to him, or are you only upon liking? [Pinches her.]

Polly. Oh!

[Screaming.]

Mrs. Peach. How the mother is to be pitied who hath handsome daughters! Locks, bolts, bars, and lectures of morality are nothing to them: they break through them all. They have as much pleasure in cheating a father and mother, as in cheating at cards.

Peach. Why, Polly, I shall soon know if you are married, by Macbeath's keeping from our house.

AIR VIII. Grim king of the ghosts, &c.

Polly. *Can love be controul'd by advice?*

Will Cupid our mothers obey?

*Though my heart were as frozen as ice,
At his flame 'twould have melted away.*

When he kist me so closely he prest,

*'Twas so sweet, that I must have comply'd:
So I thought it both safest and best*

To marry, for fear you should chide.

Mrs. Peach. Then all the hopes of our family are gone for ever and ever!

Peach. And Macbeath may hang his father and mother-in-law, in hopes to get into their daughter's fortune.

Polly. I did not marry him (as 'tis the fashion) coolly and deliberately for honour or money. But, I love him.

Mrs. Peach. Love him! worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred. Oh husband, husband! her folly makes me mad! my head swims! I'm distracted! I can't support myself—Oh! [Faints.]

Peach. See, wench, to what a condition you have reduced your poor mother! a glass of cordial, this instant. How the poor woman takes it to heart!

[Polly goes out and returns with it.]

Ah, hussy, now this is the only comfort your mother has left!

Polly. Give her another glass, sir; my mama drinks double the quantity whenever she is out of order. This, you see, fetches her.

Mrs. Peach. The girl shows such a readiness, and so

much concern, that I could almost find in my heart to forgive her.

AIR IX. O *Jenny*, O *Jenny*, where hast thou been.

O *Polly*, you might have toy'd and kist.

By keeping men off, you keep them on.

Polly.

But be so teaz'd me,

And be so pleas'd me,

What I did, you must have done.

Mrs. Peach. Not with a highway-man.—You sorry slut!

Peach. A word with you, wife. 'Tis no new thing for a wench to take man without consent of parents. You know 'tis the frailty of woman, my dear.

Mrs. Peach. Yes, indeed, the sex is frail. But the first time a woman is frail, she should be somewhat nice methinks, for then or never is the time to make her fortune. After that, she hath nothing to do but to guard herself from being found out, and she may do what she pleases.

Peach. Make yourself a little easy; I have a thought shall soon set all matters again to rights. Why so melancholy, *Polly*? since what is done cannot be undone, we must all endeavour to make the best of it.

Mrs. Peach. Well, *Polly*; as far as one woman can forgive another, I forgive thee.—Your father is too fond of you, huffy.

Polly. Then all my sorrows are at an end.

Mrs. Peach. A mighty likely speech, in troth, for a wench who is just married!

AIR X. *Thomas*, I cannot, &c.

Polly. I, like a ship in storms, was tost;

Yet afraid to put in to land;

For seiz'd in the port the vessel's lost,

Whose treasure is contraband.

The waves are laid,

My duty's paid.

O joy beyond expression!

Thus, safe a-shore,

I ask no more,

My all is in my possession.

Peach. I hear customers in t'other room; go, talk with 'em, *Polly*; but come to us again, as soon as they are gone.—But, heark ye, child, if 'tis the gentleman who was here yesterday about the repeating watch, say, you believe we can't get intelligence of it, till to-morrow. For I lent it to *Suky Straddle*, to make a figure with to-night at a tavern in *Drury-lane*. If t'other gentleman calls for the silver-hilted sword, you know beetle-brow'd *Jemmy* hath it on, and he doth not come from *Tunbridge* till *Tuesday* night; so that it cannot be had till then. [*Exit Polly.*] Dear wife, be a little pacified. Don't let your passion run away with your senses. *Polly*, I grant you, hath done a rash thing.

Mrs. Peach. If she had had only an intrigue with the fellow, why the very best families have excus'd and huddled up a frailty of that sort. 'Tis marriage, husband, that makes it a blemish.

Peach. But money, wife, is the true fuller's earth for reputations, there is not a spot or a stain but what it can take out. A rich rogue now-a-days is fit company for any gentleman; and the world, my dear, hath not such a contempt for roguery as you imagine. I tell you, wife, I can make this match turn to our advantage.

Mrs. Peach. I am very sensible, husband, that captain *Macheath* is worth money, but I am in doubt whether he hath not two or three wives already, and then, if he should die in a session or two, *Polly's* dower would come into dispute.

Peach. That, indeed, is a point which ought to be consider'd.

AIR XI. A Soldier and a Sailor.

*A Fox may steal your hens sir,
A whore your health and pence, sir,
Your daughter rob your chest, sir,
Your wife may steal your rest, sir,
A thief your goods and plate.
But this is all but picking,
With rest, pence, chest, and chicken;
It ever was decreed, sir,
If lawyer's hand is see'd, sir,
He steals your whole estate.*

The lawyers are bitter enemies to those in our way. They don't care that any body should get a clandestine livelihood but themselves.

Enter Polly.

Polly. 'Twas only Nimming *Ned*. He brought in a damask window-curtain, a hoop-petticoat, a pair of silver candlesticks, a periwig, and one silk stockings, from the fire that happen'd last night.

Peach. There is not a fellow that is cleverer in his way, and saves more goods out of the fire than *Ned*. But now, *Polly*, to your affair; for matters must not be left as they are. You are married then, it seems?

Polly. Yes, Sir.

Peach. And how do you propose to live, child?

Polly. Like other women, sir, upon the industry of my husband.

Mrs. Peach. What, is the wench turn'd fool? A highway-man's wife, like a soldier's, hath as little of his pay as of his company.

Peach. And had not you the common views of a gentlewoman in your marriage, *Polly*?

Polly. I don't know what you mean, sir.

Peach. Of a jointure, and of being a widow.

Polly. But I love him, sir: how then could I have thoughts of parting with him?

Peach. Parting with him! Why, that is the whole scheme and intention of all marriage-articles. The comfortable estate of widowhood is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits. Where is the woman who would scruple to be a wife, if she had it in her power to be a widow whenever she pleas'd? If you have any views of this sort, *Polly*, I shall think the match not so very unreasonable.

Polly. How I dread to hear your advice! Yet I must beg you to explain yourself.

Peach. Secure what he hath got, have him peach'd the next sessions, and then at once you are made a rich widow.

Polly. What, murder the man I love! The blood runs cold at my heart with the very thought of it.

Peach. Fye, *Polly*! what hath murder to do in the affair? Since the thing sooner or later must happen, I

88 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

dare say, the captain himself would like that we should get the reward for his death sooner than a stranger. Why, *Polly*, the captain knows, that as 'tis his employment to rob, so 'tis ours to take robbers; every man in his business. So that there is no malice in the case.

Mrs. Peach. Ay, husband, now you have nick'd the matter. To have him peach'd is the only thing could ever make me forgive her.

AIR XII. Now ponder well, ye parents dear.

Polly. *Oh, ponder well! be not severe;
So save a wretched wife!
For on the rope that hangs my dear,
Depends poor Polly's life.*

Mrs. Peach. But your duty to your parents, huffy, obliges you to hang him. What would many a wife give for such an opportunity!

Polly. What is a jointure, what is widowhood to me? I know my heart. I cannot survive him.

AIR XIII. Le printemps rappelle aux armes.

*The turtle thus with plaintive crying,
Her lover dying,
The turtle thus with plaintive crying
Laments her dove,
Down she drops quite spent with fighting,
Pair'd in death, as pair'd in love.*

Thus, sir, it will happen to your poor *Polly*.

Mrs. Peach. What, is the fool in love in earnest then? I hate thee for being particular: Why, wench, thou art a shame to thy very sex.

Polly. But hear me, mother.—If you ever lov'd—

Mrs. Peach. Those cursed play-books she reads have been her ruin. One word more, huffy, and I shall knock your brains out, if you have any.

Peach. Keep out of the way, *Polly*, for fear of mischief, and consider of what is propos'd to you.

Mrs. Peach. Away, huffy. Hang your husband, and be dutiful. [*Polly listening.*] The thing, husband,

must and shall be done. For the sake of intelligence we must take other measures, and have him peach'd the next session without her consent. If she will not know her duty, we know ours.

Peach. But really, my dear, it grieves one's heart to take off a great man. When I consider his personal bravery, his fine stratagem, how much we have already got by him, and how much more we may get; methinks I can't find in my heart to have a hand in his death. I wish you could have made *Polly* undertake it.

Mrs. Peach. But in a case of necessity—our own lives are in danger.

Peach. Then, indeed, we must comply with the customs of the world, and make gratitude give way to interest.—He shall be taken off.

Mrs. Peach. I'll undertake to manage *Polly*.

Peach. And I'll prepare matters for the *Old-baily*.

[*Exeunt Peachum and Mrs. Peachum.*]

Polly. Now I'm a wretch, indeed.—Methinks I see him already in the cart, sweeter and more lovely than the nosegay in his hand!—I hear the crowd extolling his resolution and intrepidity!—What volleys of sighs are sent from the windows of *Holborn*, that so comely a youth should be brought to disgrace!—I see him at the tree! the whole circle are in tears!—even butchers weep!—*Jack Ketch* himself hesitates to perform his duty, and would be glad to lose his fee, by a reprieve. What then will become of *Polly*!—As yet I may inform him of their design, and aid him in his escape.—It shall be so.—But then he flies, absents himself, and I bar myself from his dear, dear conversation! that too will distract me.—If he keeps out of the way, my papa and mama may in time relent, and we may be happy.—If he stays, he is hang'd, and then he is lost for ever!—He intended to lie conceal'd in my room, 'till the dusk of the evening: If they are abroad I'll this instant let him out, lest some accident should prevent him.

[*Exit, and returns with Macheath.*]

AIR XIV. Pretty Parrot, say, &c.

Mach. *Pretty Polly, say,
When I was away,
Did your fancy never stray
To some newer lover?*

Polly. *Without disguise,
Heaving sighs,
Doating eyes,*

My constant heart discover.

Mach. *Fondly let me loll!
O pretty, pretty Poll.*



Polly. And are you as fond as ever, my dear?

Mach. Suspect my honour, my courage, suspect any thing but my love.—May my pistols miss fire, and my mare slip her shoulder while I am pursu'd, if I ever forsake thee!

Polly. Nay, my dear, I have no reason to doubt you, for I find in the romance you lent me, none of the great heroes were ever false in love.

AIR XV. Pray, fair one, be kind.

Mach. *My heart was so free,
It row'd like the bee,
'Till Polly my passion requited;
I sapt each flower,
I chang'd ev'ry hour,
But here ev'ry flower is united.*

Polly. Were you sentenc'd to transportation, sure, my dear, you could not leave me behind you—could you?

Mach. Is there any power, any force that could tear me from thee? You might sooner tear a pension out of the hands of a courtier, a fee from a lawyer, a pretty woman from a looking-glass, or any woman from quadrille.—But to tear me from thee is impossible!

AIR XVI. Over the hills and far away.

*Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embrac'd my last;
Warm amidst eternal frost,
Too soon the half year's night would pass.*

Polly. *Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was clos'd,
I could mock the sultry soil,
When on my charmer's breast repos'd.*

Mach. *And I would love you all the day,*

Polly. *Every night would kiss and play,*

Mach. *If with me you'd fondly stray*

Polly. *Over the hills and far away.*

Polly. Yes, I would go with thee. But oh!—
how shall I speak it? I must be torn from thee. We
must part.

Mach. How! Part!

Polly. We must, we must.—My papa and mama are
set against thy life. They now, even now are in
search after thee. They are preparing evidence against
thee. Thy life depends upon a moment.

AIR XVII. *Gin thou wert mine awn thing.*

O what pain it is to part!

Can I leave thee, can I leave thee?

O what pain it is to part!

Can thy Polly ever leave thee?

But lest death my love should thwart,

And bring thee to the fatal cart,

Thus I tear thee from my bleeding heart!

Fly hence, and let me leave thee.

One kiss and then—one kiss—begone—farewell.

Mach. My hand, my heart, my dear, is so riveted
to thine, that I cannot unloose my hold.

Polly. But my papa may intercept thee, and then I
should lose the very glimmering of hope. A few
weeks, perhaps, may reconcile us all. Shall thy *Polly*
hear from thee?

Mach. Must I then go?

Polly. And will not absence change your love?

Mach. If you doubt it, let me stay—and be
hang'd.

Polly. O how I fear! how I tremble!—Go—but
when safety will give you leave, you will be sure to
see me again; for 'till then *Polly* is wretched.

92 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

AIR XVIII. O the broom, &c.

Mach. *The miser thus a shilling sees* [Parting, and looking
Which he's oblig'd to pay, back at each other
With sighs resigns it by degrees, with fondness; he
And fears 'tis gone for aye. at one door, she at
the other.

Polly. *The boy thus, when his sparrow's flown,*
The bird in silence eyes;
But soon as out of sight 'tis gone,
Whines, whimpers, sobs, and cries.



A C T II.

SCENE, *A Tavern near Newgate.*

Jemmy Twitcher, *Crook-finger'd* Jack, Wat. Dreary,
Robin of Bagshot, Nimming Ned, Henry Pading-
ton, Matt. *of the Mint*, Ben. Budge, *and the rest*
of the Gang, at the Table, with Wine, Brandy, and
Tobacco.

BEN.

BUT pr'ythee, *Matt*, what is become of thy bro-
ther *Tom*? I have not seen him since my return
from transportation.

Matt. Poor brother *Tom* had an accident this time
twelvemonth; and so clever a made-fellow he was,
that I could not save him from those fleaing rascals
the surgeons; and now, poor man, he is among the
stamys at Surgeon's Hall.

Ben. So it seems, his time was come.

Jem. But the present time is ours, and nobody alive
hath more. Why are the laws levell'd at us? Are we
more dishonest than the rest of mankind? What we
win, gentlemen, is our own by the law of arms, and
the right of conquest.

Crook. Where shall we find such another set of
practical philosophers, who to a man are above the
fear of death?

Wat. Sound men, and true!

Robin. Of try'd courage, and indefatigable industry!

Ned. Who is there here that would not die for his friend?

Harry. Who is there here that would betray him for his interest?

Matt. Show me a gang of courtiers that can say as much.

Ben. We are for a just partition of the world, for every man hath a right to enjoy life.

Matt. We retrench the superfluities of mankind. The world is avaritious, and I hate avarice. A covetous fellow, like a jack-daw, steals what he was never made to enjoy, for the sake of hiding it. These are the robbers of mankind; for money was made for the free-hearted and generous, -and where is the injury of taking from another, what he hath not the heart to make use of?

Jem. Our several stations for the day are fix'd. Good luck attend us all. Fill the glasses.

A I R XIX. Fill ev'ry glass, &c.

Matt. Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us,
And fires us

With courage, love, and joy.

Women and wine should life employ:

Is there ought else on earth desirous?

Chorus. Fill ev'ry glass, &c.

To them enter Macheath.

Mach. Gentlemen, well met. My heart hath been with you this hour; but an unexpected affair hath detain'd me. No ceremony, I beg you.

Matt. We were just breaking up to go upon duty. Am I to have the honour of taking the air with you, fir, this evening upon the Heath? I drink a dram now and then with the stage-coachmen in the way of friendship and intelligence; and I know that about this time there will be passengers upon the western road, who are worth speaking with.

Mach. I was to have been of that party—but——

Matt. But what, fir?

94 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Mach. Is there any man who suspects my courage?

Matt. We have all been witness of it.

Mach. My honour and truth to the gang?

Matt. I'll be answerable for it.

Mach. In the division of our booty, have I ever shown the least marks of avarice or injustice!

Matt. By these questions something seems to have ruffled you. Are any of us suspected?

Mach. I have a fix'd confidence, gentlemen, in you all, as men of honour, and as such I value and respect you. *Peacum* is a man that is useful to us.

Matt. Is he about to play us any foul play? I'll shoot him through the head.

Mach. I beg you, gentlemen, act with conduct and discretion. A pistol is your last resort.

Matt. He knows nothing of this meeting.

Mach. Business cannot go on without him. He is a man who knows the world, and is a necessary agent to us. We have had a slight difference, and till it is accommodated, I shall be obliged to keep out of his way. Any private dispute of mine shall be of no ill consequence to my friends. You must continue to act under his direction; for the moment we break loose from him, our gang is ruin'd.

Matt. As a bawd to a whore, I grant you, he is to us of great convenience.

Mach. Make him believe I have quitted the gang, which I can never do but with life. At our private quarters I will continue to meet you. A week or so will probably reconcile us.

Matt. Your instructions shall be observed. 'Tis now high time for us to repair to our several duties; so till the evening, at our quarters in *Moorfields*, we bid you farewell.

Mach. I shall wish myself with you. Success attend you. [*Sits down melancholy at the table.*]

AIR XX. March in *Rinaldo*, with drums and trumpets.

Matt. Let us take the road.

Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!

The hour of attack approaches,

To your arms, brave boys, and load.

*See the ball I hold !
 Let the chemists toil like asses,
 Our fire their fire surpasses,
 And turns all our lead to gold.*

[The gang ranged in the front of the stage, load their pistols, and stick them under their girdles ; then go off singing the first part in chorus.]

Mach. What a fool is a fond wench ! Polly is most confoundedly bit. — I love the sex : and a man who loves money, might as well be contented with one guinea, as I with one woman. The town perhaps hath been as much oblig'd to me, for recruiting it with free-hearted ladies, as to any recruiting officer in the army. If it were not for us and the other gentlemen of the sword, *Drury-lane* would be uninhabited.

AIR XXI. Would you have a young virgin, &c.

*If the heart of a man is deprest with cares,
 The mist is dispell'd when a woman appears ;
 Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly
 Raises the spirits, and charms our ears.*

*Roses and lillies her cheeks disclose,
 But her ripe lips are more sweet than those.*

*Press her,
 Caress her,
 With blisses,
 Her kisses*

Dissolve us in pleasure, and soft repose.

I must have women. There is nothing unbends the mind like them. Money is not so strong a cordial for the time. — *Drawer.* — *[Enter Drawer.]* Is the porter gone for all the ladies, according to my directions ?

Draw. I expect him back every minute. But you know, sir, you sent him as far as *Hockley in the Hole*, for three of the ladies, for one in *Vinegar-yard*, and for the rest of them somewhere about *Lewkner's-lane*. Sure some of them are below, for I hear the bar-bell. As they come I will show them up. — Coming, coming.

Enter Mrs. Coaxer, Dolly Trull, Mrs. Vixen, Betty Doxy, Jenny Diver, Mrs. Slammekin, Suky Tawdry, and Molly Brazen.

Macb. Dear Mrs. Coaxer, you are welcome: you look charmingly to-day. I hope you don't want the repairs of quality, and lay on paint.—*Dolly Trull!* kiss me, you slut; are you as amorous as ever, hussy? You are always so taken up with stealing hearts, that you don't allow yourself time to steal any thing else.—Ah, *Dolly*, thou wilt ever be a coquette!—*Mrs. Vixen*, I'm yours, I always lov'd a woman of wit and spirit; they make charming mistresses, but plaguy wives.—*Betty Doxy!* come hither, hussy: do you drink as hard as ever? You had better stick to good wholesome beer; for in troth, *Betty*, strong waters will in time ruin your constitution: you should leave those to your betters.—What! and my pretty *Jenny Diver* too! as prim and demure as ever! There is not any prude, though ever so high bred, hath a more sanctify'd look, with a more mischievous heart: ah! thou art a dear artful hypocrite.—*Mrs. Slammekin!* as careless and genteel as ever! all you fine ladies, who know your own beauty, affect undress.—But see, here's *Suky Tawdry* come to contradict what I was saying: every thing she gets one way, she lays out upon her back. Why, *Suky*, you must keep at least a dozen tally-men. *Molly Brazen!* [*she kisses him.*] That's well done. I love a free-hearted wench: thou hast a most agreeable assurance, girl, and art as willing as a turtle.—But hark! I hear music. The harper is at the door. “If music be the food of love, play on.” Ere you seat yourselves, ladies; what think you of a dance? Come in. [*Enter Harper.*] Play the French tune, that Mrs. Slammekin was so fond of.

[*A dance à la Ronde in the French manner; near the end of it this Song and Chorus.*]

A I R XXII. Cotillon.

*Youth's the season made for joys,
Love is then our duty;
She alone who that employs,
Well deserves her beauty.*

*Let's be gay,
While we may,
Beauty's a flower despis'd in decay.*

Chorus. *Youth's the season, &c.*

*Let us drink and sport to-day,
Ours is not to-morrow.
Love with youth flies swift away,
Age is nought but sorrow.
Dance and sing,
Time's on the wing,
Life never knows the return of spring.*

Chorus. *Let us drink, &c.*

Mac. Now pray, ladies, take your places. Here, fellow [*pays the Harper.*] Bid the drawer bring us more wine. [*Exit Harper.*] If any of the ladies chuse gin, I hope they will be so free as to call for it.

Jenny. You look as if you meant me. Wine is strong enough for me. Indeed, sir, I never drink strong waters, but when I have the colic.

Mach. Just the excuse of the fine ladies! Why, a lady of quality is never without the colic.—I hope, Mrs. Coaxer, you have had good success of late in your visits among the mercers.

Coax. We have so many interlopers.—Yet with industry, one may still have a little picking. I carried a silver-flower'd lustring and a piece of black padefoy to Mr. Peachum's lock but last week.

Vix. There's Molly Brazen hath the ogle of a rattlesnake. She rivetted a linen-draper's eyes so fast upon her, that he was nick'd of three pieces of cambrick before he could look off.

Brax. O dear madam!—But sure nothing can come up to your handling of laces! And then you have such a sweet deluding tongue! To cheat a man is nothing; but the woman must have fine parts indeed, who cheats a woman!

Vix. Lace, madam, lies in a small compass, and is of easy conveyance. But you are apt, madam, to think too well of your friends.

Coax. If any woman hath more art than another, to be sure, 'tis Jenny Diver. Though her fellow be

never so agreeable, she can pick his pocket as coolly, as if money were her only pleasure. Now that is a command of the passions uncommon in a woman!

Jenny. I never go to the tavern with a man, but in the view of business. I have other hours, and other sort of men for my pleasure. But had I your address, madam—

Mach. Have done with your compliments, ladies; and drink about. You are not so fond of me, *Jenny*, as you use to be.

Jenny. 'Tis not convenient, sir, to show my fondness among so many rivals. 'Tis your own choice, and not the warmth of my inclination, that will determine you.

A I R XXIII. All in a misty morning.

*Before the barn-door crowing,
The cock by hens attended,
His eyes around him throwing,
Stands for a while suspended:
Then one he singles from the crew,
And cheers the happy hen;
With how do you do, and how do you do,
And how do you do again.*

Mach. Ah *Jenny*! thou art a dear slut.

Trull. Pray, madam, were you ever in keeping?

Tawd. I hope, madam, I ha'n't been so long upon the town, but I have met with some good fortune as well as my neighbours.

Trull. Pardon me, madam, I meant no harm by the question; 'twas only in the way of conversation.

Tawd. Indeed, madam, if I had not been a fool, I might have liv'd very handsomely with my last friend. But upon his missing five guineas, he turn'd me off. Now I never suspected he had counted them.

Slam. Who do you look upon, madam, as your best sort of keepers?

Trull. That, madam, is thereafter as they be.

Slam. I, madam, was once kept by a *Jeró*; and, bating their religion, to women they are a good sort of people.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 99

Tawd. Now for my part, I own I like an old fellow : for we always make them pay for what they can't do.

Vix. A spruce 'prentice, let me tell you, ladies, is no ill thing ; they bleed freely. I have sent at least two or three dozen of them, in my time, to the plantations.

Jenny. But to be sure, sir, with so much good fortune as you have had upon the road, you must be grown immensely rich.

Macb. The road, indeed, hath done me justice, but the gaming-table hath been my ruin.

AIR XXIV. When once I lay with another man's wife, &c.

Jenny. *The gamesters and lawyers are jugglers alike,
If they meddle, your all is in danger :
Like gypsies, if once they can finger a souse,
Your pockets they pick, and they pilfer your house,
And give your estate to a stranger.*

A man of courage should never put any thing to the risque, but his life. These are the tools of a man of honour. Cards and Dice are only fit for cowardly cheats, who prey upon their friends.

[*She takes up his pistol. Tawdry takes up the other.*

Tawd. This, sir, is fitter for your hand. Besides your loss of money, 'tis a loss to the ladies. Gaming takes you off from women. How fond could I be of you ! but before company, 'tis ill bred.

Macb. Wanton huffies !

Jen. I must and will have a kiss to give my wine a zest. [*They take him about the neck, and make signs to Peachum and Constaibles, who rush in upon him.*

Enter to them Peachum and Constaibles.

Peach. I seize you, sir, as my prisoner.

Macb. Was this well done, *Jenny* ! — Women are decoy ducks ; who can trust them ! Beasts, jades, jilts, harpies, furies, whores !

Peach. Your case, Mr. *Macbeath*, is not particular. The greatest heroes have been ruin'd by women. But, to do them justice, I must own they are a pretty sort of

creatures, if we could trust them. You must now, fir, take your leave of the ladies, and if they have a mind to make you a visit, they will be sure to find you at home. The gentleman, ladies, lodges in *Newgate*. Constables, wait upon the captain to his lodgings.

AIR XXV. When first I laid siege to my *Chloris*.

Mach. At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure,
At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure,
Let me go where I will,
In all kinds of ill,
I shall find no such furies as these are.

Peach. Ladies, I'll take care the reckoning shall be discharg'd.

[*Exit Macheath guarded, with Peachum and Constables; the women remain.*]

Vix. Look ye, Mrs. *Fenny*, though Mr. *Peachum* may have made a private bargain with you and *Suky Fawdry*, for betraying the captain, as we were all assisting, we ought all to share alike.

Coax. I think Mr. *Peachum*, after so long an acquaintance, might have trusted me as well as *Jenny Diver*.

Slam. I am sure at least three men of his hanging, and in a year's time too, (if he did me justice) should be set down to my account.

Trull. Mrs. *Slammekin*, that is not fair: for you know one of them was taken in bed with me.

Jenny. As far as a bowl of punch or a treat, I believe Mrs. *Suky* will join with me.—As for any thing else, ladies, you cannot in conscience expect it.

Slam. Dear madam.—

Trull. I would not for the world.—

Slam. 'Tis impossible for me.—

Trull. As I hope to be saved, madam.—

Slam. Nay, then I must stay here all night.—

Trull. Since you command me.

[*Exeunt with great ceremony.*]

SCENE, *Newgate.*

Lockit, Turnkeys, Macheath, and Constables.

Lock. Noble captain, you are welcome. You have not been a lodger of mine this year and half. You know the custom, fir; garnish, captain, garnish. Hand me down those fetters there.

Mach. Those, Mr. *Lockit*, seem to be the heaviest of the whole set. With your leave, I should like the further pair better.

Lock. Look ye, captain, we know what is fittest for our prisoners. When a gentleman uses me with civility, I always do the best I can to please him.—Hand them down, I say—We have them of all prices, from one guinea to ten, and 'tis fitting every gentleman should please himself.

Mach. I understand you, fir. [*Gives money.*] The fees here are so many, and so exorbitant, that few fortunes can bear the expence of getting off handsomely, or of dying like a gentleman.

Lock. Those, I see, will fit the captain better.—Take down the further pair.—Do but examine them, fir—Never was better work.—How genteelly they are made!—They will sit as easy as a glove, and the nicest man in *England* might not be ashamed to wear them. [*He puts on the chains.*] If I had the best gentleman in the land in my custody, I could not equip him more handsomely. And so, fir,—I now leave you to your private meditations.

[*Exeunt Lockit, Turnkeys, and Constables.*]

AIR XXVI. Courtiers, courtiers think it no harm.

Mach. Man may escape from rope and gun;

Nay, some have out-liv'd the doctor's pill:

Who takes woman must be undone,

That basilisk is sure to kill.

The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets,

So he that tastes woman, woman, woman,

He that tastes woman, ruin meets.

To what a woful plight have I brought myself! Here must I (all day long, 'till I am hang'd) be confin'd to hear the reproaches of a wench, who lays her ruin at my door.—I am in the custody of her father, and to be sure, if he knows of the matter, I shall have a fine time on't betwixt this and my execution.—But I promised the wench marriage.—What signifies a promise to a woman? does not man in marriage itself promise a hundred things that he never means to perform? Do all we can, women will believe us; for they look upon a promise as an excuse for following their own inclinations.—But here comes *Lucy*, and I cannot get from her—wou'd I were deaf.

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. You base man, you,—how can you look me in the face, after what hath past between us?—See here, perfidious wretch, how I am forc'd to bear about the load of infamy you have laid upon me—O *Macheach*! thou hast robb'd me of my quiet—to see thee tortur'd would give me pleasure.

AIR XXVII. A lovely lass to a friar came.

*Thus when a good huswife sees a rat,
In her trap in the morning taken,
With pleasure her heart goes pit a pat,
In revenge for her loss of bacon.
Then she throws him
To the dog or cat,
To be worried, crush'd, and shaken.*

Mach. Have you no bowels, no tenderness, my dear *Lucy*, to see a husband in these circumstances?

Lucy. A husband?

Mach. In ev'ry respect but the form, and that, my dear, may be said over us at any time.—Friends should not insist upon ceremonies. From a man of honour, his word is as good as his bond.

Lucy. 'Tis the pleasure of all you fine men to insult the women you have ruin'd.

AIR XXVIII. 'Twas when the sea was roaring.

*How cruel are the traitors,
 Who lie and swear in jest,
 To cheat unguarded creatures
 Of virtue, fame, and rest!
 Whoever steals a shilling,
 Tho' shame the guilt conceals;
 In love the perjur'd villain
 With boasts the theft reveals.*

Mach. The very first opportunity, my dear, (have but patience) you shall be my wife in whatever manner you please.

Lucy. Insinuating monster! And so you think I know nothing of the affair of Miss *Polly Peachum*.—— I could tear thy eyes out!

Mach. Sure, *Lucy*, you can't be such a fool as to be jealous of *Polly*!

Lucy. Are you not married to her, you brute, you?

Mach. Married! Very good. The wench gives it out only to vex thee, and to ruin me in thy good opinion. 'Tis true, I go to the house; I chat with the girl, I kiss her, I say a thousand things to her (as all gentlemen do) that mean nothing, to divert myself; and now the silly jade hath set it about that I am married to her, to let me know what she would be at. Indeed, my dear *Lucy*, these violent passions may be of ill consequence to a woman in your condition.

Lucy. Come, come, captain, for all your assurance, you know that Miss *Polly* hath put it out of your power to do me the justice you promis'd me.

Mach. A jealous woman believes every thing her passion suggests. To convince you of my sincerity, if we can find the ordinary, I shall have no scruples of making you my wife; and I know the consequence of having two at a time.

Lucy. That you are only to be hang'd, and so get rid of them both.

Mach. I am ready, my dear *Lucy*, to give you satisfaction——if you think there is any in marriage.——What can a man of honour say more?

Lucy. So then it seems you are not married to miss *Polly*.

Mach. You know, *Lucy*, the girl is prodigiously conceited. No man can say a civil thing to her, but (like other fine ladies) her vanity makes her think he's her own for ever and ever.

AIR XXIX. The sun had loos'd his weary teams.

The first time at the looking-glass

The mother sets her daughter,

The image strikes the smiling lass

With self-love ever after.

Each time she looks, she, fonder grown,

Thinks ev'ry charm grows stronger :

But alas, vain maid, all eyes but your own

Can see you are not younger.

When women consider their own beauties, they are all alike unreasonable in their demands; for they expect their lovers should like them as long as they like themselves.

Lucy. Yonder is my father——perhaps this way we may light upon the ordinary, who shall try if you will be as good as your word——for I long to be made an honest woman. [Exeunt.

Enter Peachum and Lockit, with an account book.

Lock. In this last affair, brother *Peachum*, we are agreed. You have consented to go halves in *Macheath*.

Peach. We shall never fall out about an execution.—But as to that article, pray how stands our last year's account?

Lock. If you will run your eye over it, you'll find 'tis fair and clearly stated.

Peach. This long arrear of the government is very hard upon us! Can it be expected that we should hang our acquaintance for nothing, when our betters will hardly save theirs without being paid for it? Unless the people in employment pay better, I promise them for the future, I shall let other rogues live besides their own.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 105

Lock. Perhaps, brother, they are afraid these matters may be carried too far. We are treated too by them with contempt, as if our profession were not reputable.

Peach. In one respect indeed, our employment may be reckoned dishonest; like great statesmen, we encourage those who betray their friends.

Lock. Such language, brother, any where else, might turn to your prejudice. Learn to be more guarded, I beg you.

AIR XXX. How happy are we, &c.

*When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be :
If you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe ;
Each cries——That was levell'd at me.*

Peach. Here's poor *Ned Clincher's* name, I see. Sure, brother *Lockit*, there was a little unfair proceeding in *Ned's* case : for he told me in the condemn'd hold, that, for value receiv'd, you had promis'd him a fession or two longer without molestation.

Lock. Mr. *Peachum*,—this is the first time my honour was ever call'd in question.

Peach. Business is at an end—if once we act dishonourably.

Lock. Who accuses me ?

Peach. You are warm, brother.

Lock. He that attacks my honour, attacks my livelihood.—And this usage—sir—is not to be borne.

Peach. Since you provoke me to speak—I must tell you too, that Mrs. *Coaxer* charges you with defrauding her of her information-money, for the apprehending of curl-pated *Hugh*. Indeed, indeed, brother, we must punctually pay our spies, or we shall have no information.

Lock. Is this language to me, firrah—who have sav'd you from the gallows, firrah ! [*Collaring each other.*

Peach. If I am hang'd, it shall be for ridding the world of an arrant rascal.

Lock. This hand shall do the office of the halter you deserve, and throttle you—you dog !—

106 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Peach. Brother, brother,—we are both in the wrong—we shall be both losers in the dispute—for you know we have it in our power to hang each other. You should not be so passionate.

Lock. Nor you so provoking.

Peach. 'Tis our mutual interest; 'tis for the interest of the world we should agree. If I said any thing, brother, to the prejudice of your character, I ask pardon.

Lock. Brother *Peachum*—I can forgive as well as resent—Give me your hand. Suspicion does not become a friend.

Peach. I only meant to give you occasion to justify yourself: But I must now step home, for I expect the gentleman about this snuff-box, that *Filch* nimm'd two nights ago in the Park. I appointed him at this hour. [Exit.

Enter Lucy.

Lock. Whence come you, huffy?

Lucy. My tears might answer that question.

Lock. You have then been whimpering and fondling, like a spaniel, over the fellow that hath abus'd you.

Lucy. One can't help love; one can't cure it. 'Tis not in my power to obey you, and hate him.

Lock. Learn to bear your husband's death like a reasonable woman. 'Tis not the fashion, now-a-days, so much as to affect sorrow upon these occasions. No woman would ever marry, if she had not the chance of mortality for a release. Act like a woman of spirit, huffy, and thank your father for what he is doing.

A I R. XXXI. Of a noble race was *Shenkin*..

Lucy. Is then his fate decreed, sir,

Such a man can I think of quitting?

When first we met, so moves me yet,

O see how my heart is splitting!

Lock. Look ye, *Lucy*—there is no saving him—So, I think, you must ev'n do like other widows—buy yourself weeds, and be chearful.

A I R XXXII.

*You'll think, ere many days ensue,
 This sentence not severe;
 I hang your husband, child, 'tis true;
 But with him hang your care.
 Twang dang dilla dee.*

Like a good wife, go moan over your dying husband.
 That, child, is your duty—consider, girl, you can't
 have the man and the money too—so make yourself
 as easy as you can by getting all you can from him.

[Exit.]

Enter Macheath.

Lucy. Though the ordinary was out of the way to day, I hope, my dear, you will, upon the first opportunity, quiet my scruples—Oh sir!—my father's hard heart is not to be soften'd, and I am in the utmost despair.

Mach. But if I could raise a small sum—would not twenty guineas, think you, move him?—Of all the arguments in the way of business, the perquisite is the most prevailing.—Your father's perquisites for the escape of prisoners must amount to a considerable sum in the year. Money well tim'd, and properly applied, will do any thing.

A I R XXXIII. *London ladies.*

*If you at an office solicit your due,
 And would not have matters neglected;
 You must quicken the clerk with the perquisite too,
 To do what his duty directed.
 Or would you the frowns of a lady prevent,
 She too has this palpable failing;
 The perquisite softens her into consent;
 That reason with all is prevailing.*

Lucy. What love or money can do, shall be done:
 for all my comfort depends upon your safety.

Enter Polly.

Polly. Where is my dear husband?—Was a rope ever intended for this neck!—O let me throw my

AIR XXXVII.

Polly. *Cease your funning ;
 Force or cunning
 Never shall my heart trepan.
 All these sallies
 Are but malice,
 To seduce my constant man.
 'Tis most certain,
 By their flirting,
 Women oft have envy shown :
 Pleas'd, to ruin
 Others wooing ;
 Never happy in their own !*

Polly. Decency, madam, methinks might teach you to behave yourself with some reserve with the husband, while his wife is present.

Macb. But seriously, Polly, this is carrying the joke a little too far.

Lucy. If you are determin'd, madam, to raise a disturbance in the prison, I shall be oblig'd to send for the turnkey to shew you the door. I am sorry, madam, you force me to be so ill-brad.

Polly. Give me leave to tell you, madam, these forward airs don't become you in the least, madam. And my duty, madam, obliges me to stay with my husband, madam.

AIR XXXVIII. Good-morrow, Gossip Joan.

Lucy. *Why, how now, madam Flirt ?
 If you thus must chatter,
 And are for flinging dirt,
 Let's try who best can spatter ;*
 Madam Flirt !!

Polly. *Why how now, saucy jade ?
 Sure the wench is tipsy !
 How can you see me made* [To him.
The scoff of such a gypsy ?
Saucy jade ! [To her.

Enter Peachum.

Peach. Where's my wench ? Ah hussy ! hussy ! —
 ne you home, you slut ; and when your fellow is

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 111

hang'd, hang yourself, to make your family some amends.

Polly. Dear, dear father, do not tear me from him—I must speak; I have more to say to him—Oh! twist thy fetters about me, that he may not haul me from thee!

Peach. Sure all women are alike! If ever they commit the folly, they are sure to commit another by exposing themselves—Away—Not a word more—You are my prisoner now, huffy.

AIR XXXIX. Irish Howl.

Polly. *No power on earth can e'er divide
The knot that sacred love hath ty'd.
When parents draw against our mind,
The true-love's knot they faster bind.
Oh, oh ray, oh Amborab—oh, oh, &c.*

[*Exeunt Peachum and Polly.*]

Mach. I am naturally compassionate, wife; so that I could not use the wench as she deserv'd; which made you at first suspect there was something in what she said.

Lucy. Indeed, my dear, I was strangely puzzled.

Mach. If that had been the case, her father would never have brought me into this circumstance—No, *Lucy*,—I had rather die than be false to thee.

Lucy. How happy am I, if you say this from your heart! For I love thee so, that I could sooner bear to see thee hang'd than in the arms of another.

Mach. But couldst thou bear to see me hang'd?

Lucy. O *Macheath*, I can never live to see that day.

Mach. You see, *Lucy*, in the account of love you are in my debt; and you must now be convinc'd, that I rather chuse to die than be another's.—Make me, if possible, love thee more, and let me owe my life to thee—If you refuse to assist me, *Peachum* and your father will immediately put me beyond all means of escape.

Lucy. My father, I know, hath been drinking hard with the prisoners: and I fancy he is now taking his nap in his own room—If I can procure the keys, shall I go off with thee, my dear?

Lock. So I am to be ruin'd, because, forsooth, you must be in love! — a very pretty excuse!

Lucy. I could murder that impudent happy strumpet: — I gave him his life, and that creature enjoys the sweets of it. — Ungrateful *Macheath*!

AIR XLII. *South-Sea ballad.*

*My love is all madness and folly,
Alone I lye,
Toss, tumble, and cry,
What a happy creature is Polly!
Was e'er such a wretch as I!
With rage I redden like scarlet,
That my dear inconstant varlet,
Stark blind to my charms,
Is lost in the arms
Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot!
Stark blind to my charms,
Is lost in the arms
Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot!
This, this my resentment alarms.*

Lock. And so, after all this mischief, I must stay here to be entertain'd with your catterwauling, mistress Puss! — Out of my sight, wanton strumpet! you shall fast and mortify yourself into reason, with now and then a little handsome discipline to bring you to your senses. — Go. [*Exit Lucy.*] *Peachum* then intends to outwit me in this affair; but I'll be even with him. — The dog is leaky in his liquor, so I'll ply him that way, get the secret from him, and turn this affair to my own advantage. — Lions, wolves, and vultures don't live together in herds, droves, or flocks. — Of all animals of prey, man is the only sociable one. Every one of us preys upon his neighbour, and yet we herd together. — *Peachum* is my companion, my friend — According to the custom of the world, indeed, he may quote thousands of precedents for cheating me — And shall I not make use of the privilege of friendship to make him a return?

AIR XLIII. *Packington's pound.*

*Thus gamesters united in friendship are found,
Though they know that their industry all is a cheat;
They flock to their prey at the dice-box's sound,
And join to promote one another's deceit.*

*But if by mishap
They fail of a chap,
To keep in their hands, they each other entrap.
Like pikes, lank with hunger, who miss of their ends,
They bite their companions, and prey on their friends.*

Now, *Peachum*, you and I, like honest tradesmen, are to have a fair trial, which of us two can over-reach the other. — *Lucy*. — [*Enter Lucy.*] Are there any of *Peachum's* people now in the house?

Lucy. *Filch*, sir, is drinking a quartern of strong waters in the next room, with black *Moll*.

Lock. Bid him come to me. [*Exit Lucy.*]

Enter Filch.

Why, boy, thou lookest as if thou wert half starv'd; like a shotten herring.

Filch. One had need have the constitution of a horse to go thorough the business. — Since the favourite child-getter was disabled by a mishap, I have pick'd up a little money by helping the ladies to a pregnancy against their being call'd down to sentence. — But if a man cannot get an honest livelihood any easier way, I am sure, 'tis what I can't undertake for another session.

Lock. Truly, if that great man should tip off, 'twould be an irreparable loss. The vigor and prowess of a knight-errant never sav'd half the ladies in distress that he hath done. — But, boy, can'st thou tell me where thy master is to be found?

Filch. At his lock*, sir, at the *Crooked Billet*.

Lock. Very well. — I have nothing more with you. [*Exit Filch.*] I'll go to him there, for I have many important affairs to settle with him; and in the way of those transactions, I'll artfully get into his secret. — So that *Macheath* shall not remain a day longer out of my clutches. [*Exit.*]

* A cant word, signifying a warehouse where stolen goods are deposited.

SCENE, a Gaming-house.

Macheath in a fine tarnish'd coat, Ben. Budge,
Matt. of the Mint.

Mach. I am sorry, gentlemen, the road was so barren of money. When my friends are in difficulties, I am always glad that my fortune can be serviceable to them. [*Gives them money.*] You see, gentlemen, I am not a mere court-friend, who professes every thing and will do nothing.

AIR XLIV. Lillibulero.

*The modes of the court so common are grown,
That a true friend can hardly be met;
Friendship for interest is but a loan,
Which they let out for what they can get.
'Tis true, you find
Some friends so kind,
Who will give you good counsel themselves to defend:
In sorrowful ditty,
They promise, they pity,
But shift you for money, from friend to friend.*

But we, gentlemen, have still honour enough to break through the corruption of the world.—And while I can serve you, you may command me.

Ben. It grieves my heart that so generous a man should be involv'd in such difficulties, as oblige him to live with such ill company, and herd with gamesters.

Matt. See the partiality of mankind!—One man may steal a horse, better than another look over a hedge.—Of all mechanics, of all servile handicraftsmen, a gamester is the vilest. But yet, as many of the quality are of the profession, he is admitted amongst the politest company. I wonder we are not more respected.

Mach. There will be deep play to-night at *Marybone*, and consequently money may be pick'd up upon the road. Meet me there, and I'll give you the hint who is worth setting.

Matt. The fellow with a brown coat with a narrow gold binding, I am told, is never without money.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 117

Mach. What do you mean, *Matt*?—Sure you will not think of meddling with him!—He's a good honest kind of a fellow, and one of us.

Ben. To be sure, sir, we will put ourselves under your direction.

Mach. Have an eye upon the money-lenders.—A rouleau, or two, would prove a pretty sort of an expedition. I hate extortion.

Matt. Those rouleaus are very pretty things.—I hate your bank bills—there is such a hazard in putting them off.

Mach. There is a certain man of distinction, who in his time hath nick'd me out of a great deal of the ready. He is in my cash, *Ben*;—I'll point him out to you this evening, and you shall draw upon him for the debt.—The company are met; I hear the dice-box in the other room. So, gentlemen, your servant. You'll meet me at *Marybone*.

SCENE, Peachum's Lock.

A Table with Wine, Brandy, Pipes, and Tobacco.

Peachum, Lockit.

Lock. The coronation account, brother *Peachum*, is of so intricate a nature, that I believe it will never be settled.

Peach. It consists indeed of a great variety of articles.—It was worth to our people, in fees of different kinds, above ten instalments.—This is part of the account, brother, that lies open before us.

Lock. A lady's tail of rich brocade—that, I see, is dispos'd of.

Peach. To Mrs. *Diana Trapes*, the tally-woman, and she will make a good hand on't in shoes and slippers, to trick out young ladies, upon their going into keeping.—

Lock. But I don't see any article of the jewels.

Peach. Those are so well known, that they must be sent abroad—you'll find them enter'd under the article of exportation.—As for the snuff-boxes, watches, swords, &c.—I thought it best to enter them under their several heads.

118 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Lock. Seven and twenty women's pockets complete; with the several things therein contain'd; all seal'd, number'd, and enter'd.

Peach. But, brother, it is impossible for us now to enter upon this affair.—We should have the whole day before us.—Besides, the account of the last half year's plate is in a book by itself, which lies at the other office.

Lock. Bring us then more liquor.—To-day shall be for pleasure—to-morrow for business.—Ah, brother, those daughters of ours are two slippery hussies—keep a watchful eye upon *Polly*, and *Macbeath* in a day or two shall be our own again.

AIR XLV. Down in the North Country.

Lock. *What gudgeons are we men!*

Ev'ry woman's easy prey:

Though we have felt the hook, agen

We bite, and they betray.

The bird that hath been trapt,

When he hears his calling mate,

To her he flies, again he's clapt

Within the wiry grate.

Peach. But what signifies catching the bird, if your daughter *Lucy* will set open the door of the cage?

Lock. If men were answerable for the follies and frailties of their wives and daughters, no friends could keep a good correspondence together for two days.—This is unkind of you, brother; for among good friends, what they say or do goes for nothing.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's Mrs. *Diana Trapes* wants to speak with you.

Peach. Shall we admit her, brother *Lockit*?

Lock. By all means—she's a good customer, and a fine-spoken woman—and a woman who drinks and talks so freely will enliven the conversation.

Peach. Desire her to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*]

Enter Mrs. Trapes.

Peach. Dear Mrs. *Dye*, your servant—one may know by your kifs, that your ginn is excellent.

Trapes. I was always very curious in my liquors.

Lock. There is no perfum'd breath like it—I have been long acquainted with the flavour of those lips—han't I, Mrs. Dye?

Trapes. Fill it up.—I take as large draughts of liquor, as I did of love.—I hate a flincher in either.

AIR XLVI. A Shepherd kept sheep, &c.

In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove, fa, la, la, &c
Like a sparrow at all times was ready for love, fa, la, la, &c
The life of all mortals in kissing should pass,
Lip to lip while we're young, then the lip to the glass,
fa, la, &c.

But now, Mr. Peachum, to our business. If you have blacks of any kind, brought in of late; mantoes—velvet scarfs—petticoats—let it be what it will—I am your chap—for all my ladies are very fond of mourning.

Peach. Why, look ye, Mrs. Dye—you deal so hard with us, that we can afford to give the gentlemen, who venture their lives for the goods, little or nothing.

Trap. The hard times oblige me to go very near in my dealing.—To be sure, of late years I have been a great sufferer by the parliament.—Three thousand pounds would hardly make me amends.—The act for destroying the Mint was a severe cut upon our business—'till then, if a customer stepped out of the way—we knew where to have her—no doubt you know Mrs. Coaxer—there's a wench now ('till to-day) with a good suit of cloaths of mine upon her back, and I could never set eyes upon her for three months together.—Since the act too against imprisonment for small sums, my loss there too hath been very considerable; and it must be so, when a lady can borrow a handsome petticoat, or a clean gown, and I not have the least hank upon her! And, o' my conscience, now-a-days most ladies take a delight in cheating, when they can do it with safety.

Peach. Madam, you had a handsome gold watch of us t'other day for seven guineas.—Considering we must have our profit—to a gentleman upon the road, a gold watch will be scarce worth the taking.

Trap. Consider, Mr. *Peachum*, that watch was remarkable, and not of very safe sale.—If you have any black velvet scarfs—they are a handsome winter wear; and take with most gentlemen who deal with my customers.—'Tis I that put the ladies upon a good foot. 'Tis not youth or beauty that fixes their price. The gentlemen always pay according to their drefs, from half a crown to two guineas; and yet those huffies make nothing of bilking of me.—Then too, allowing for accidents.—I have eleven fine customers now down under the surgeon's hand,—what with fees and other expences, there are great goings-out, and no comings-in, and not a farthing to pay for at least a month's cloathing.—We run great risques—great risques indeed.

Peach. As I remember, you said something just now of Mrs. *Coaxer*.

Trap. Yes, sir,—To be sure I stript her of a suit of my own cloaths about two hours ago; and have left her as she should be, in her shift, with a lover of hers at my house. She call'd him up stairs, as he was going to *Marybone* in a hackney-coach.—And I hope, for her own sake and mine, she will persuade the captain to redeem her, for the captain is very generous to the ladies.

Lock. What captain?

Trap. He thought I did not know him.—An intimate acquaintance of yours, Mr. *Peachum*—only captain *Macbeath*—as fine as a lord.

Peach. To-morrow, dear Mrs. *Dye*, you shall set your own price upon any of the goods you like—we have at least half a dozen velvet scarfs, and all at your service. Will you give me leave to make you a present of this suit of night-cloaths for your own wearing?—But are you sure it is captain *Macbeath*!

Trap. Though he thinks I have forgot him, no body knows him better. I have taken a great deal of the captain's money in my time, at second-hand, for he always lov'd to have his ladies well drest.

Peach. Mr. *Lockit* and I have a little business with the captain;—you understand me—and we will satisfy you for Mrs. *Coaxer*'s debt.

Lock. Depend upon it—we will deal like men of honour.

Trap. I don't enquire after your affairs—so whatever happens, I wash my hands on't.—It hath always been my maxim, that one friend should assist another.—But if you please—I'll take one of the scarfs home with me, 'tis always good to have something in hand.

SCENE, *Newgate.*

Lucy.

Jealousy, rage, love, and fear are at once tearing me to pieces. How I am weather-beaten and shatter'd with distresses!

AIR XLVII. One evening having lost my way.

*I'm like a skiff on the ocean tost,
Now high, now low, with each billow born,
With her rudder broke, and her anchor lost,
Deserted and all forlorn.
While thus I lie rolling and tossing all night,
That Polly lies sporting on seas of delight!
Revenge, revenge, revenge,
Shall appease my restless sprite.*

I have the rats-bane ready.—I run no risque; for I can lay her death upon the gin, and so many die of that naturally, that I shall never be call'd in question.—But say I were to be hang'd—I never could be hang'd for any thing that would give me greater comfort, than the poisoning that slut.

Enter Filch.

Filch. Madam, here's our Miss *Polly* come to wait upon you.

Lucy. Show her in.

Enter Polly.

Lucy. Dear madam, your servant.—I hope you will pardon my passion, when I was so happy to see you last.—I was so over-run with the spleen, that I was perfectly out of myself. And really when one hath the spleen, every thing is to be excus'd by a friend.

AIR XLVIII. Now, Roger, I'll tell thee, because
thou'rt my son.

*When a wife's in her pout,
(As she's sometimes, no doubt)
The good husband as meek as a lamb,
Her vapours to still,
First grants her her will,
And the quieting draught is a dram.*

Poor man! And the quieting draught is a dram.

—I wish all our quarrels might have so comfortable a reconciliation.

Polly. I have no excuse for my own behaviour, madam, but my misfortunes.—And really, madam, I suffer too upon your account.

Lucy. But, Miss *Polly*—in the way of friendship, will you give me leave to propose a glass of cordial to you?

Polly. Strong-waters are apt to give me the headache—I hope, madam, you will excuse me.

Lucy. Not the greatest lady in the land could have better in her closet, for her own private drinking.—You seem mighty low in spirits, my dear.

Polly. I am sorry, madam, my health will not allow me to accept of your offer.—I should not have left you in the rude manner I did when we met last, madam, had not my papa haul'd me away so unexpectedly.—I was indeed somewhat provok'd, and perhaps might use some expressions that were disrespectful.—But really, madam, the captain treated me with so much contempt and cruelty, that I deserv'd your pity, rather than your resentment.

Lucy. But since his escape, no doubt all matters are made up again.—Ah *Polly! Polly!* 'tis I am the unhappy wife; and he loves you as if you were only his mistress.

Polly. Sure, madam, you cannot think me so happy as to be the object of your jealousy.—A man is always afraid of a woman who loves him too well—so that I must expect to be neglected and avoided.

Lucy. Then our cases, my dear *Polly*, are exactly alike. Both of us indeed have been too fond.

AIR XLIX. O *Bessy Bell*, &c.

Polly. A curse attends that woman's love
Who always would be pleasing.

Lucy. The pertness of the billing dove,
Like tickling, is but teasing.

Polly. What then in love can woman do?

Lucy. If we grow fond they shun us.

Polly. And when we fly them, they pursue :

Lucy. But leave us when they've won us.

Lucy. Love is so very whimsical in both sexes, that it is impossible to be lasting.—But my heart is particular, and contradicts my own observation.

Polly. But really, mistress *Lucy*, by his last behaviour, I think I ought to envy you.—When I was forc'd from him, he did not shew the least tenderness.—But perhaps, he hath a heart not capable of it.

AIR L. Wou'd fate to me *Belinda* give.

*Among the men, coquets we find,
Who court by turns all woman-kind;
And we grant all their hearts desir'd,
When they are flatter'd and admir'd.*

The coquets of both sexes are self-lovers, and that is a love no other whatever can dispossess. I fear, my dear *Lucy*, our husband is one of those.

Lucy. Away with these melancholy reflections,—indeed, my dear *Polly*, we are both of us a cup too low.—Let me prevail upon you, to accept of my offer.

AIR LL. Come, sweet lass.

*Come, sweet lass,
Let's banish sorrow
'Till to-morrow;
Come, sweet lass,
Let's take a chirping glass.
Wine can clear
The vapours of despair;
And make us light as air;
Then drink, and banish care.*

I can't bear, child, to see you in such low spirits.—And I must persuade you to what I know will do you

124 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA:

good.—I shall now soon be even with the hypocritical strumpet. [*Afide.*]

[*Exit.*]

Polly. All this wheedling of *Lucy* cannot be for nothing.—At this time too! when I know she hates me!—The dissembling of a woman is always the forerunner of mischief.—By pouring strong-waters down my throat, she thinks to pump some secrets out of me.—I'll be upon my guard, and won't taste a drop of her liquor, I'm resolv'd.

Enter Lucy, with strong waters.

Lucy. Come, Miss *Polly*.

Polly. Indeed, child, you have given yourself trouble to no purpose.—You must, my dear, excuse me.

Lucy. Really, Miss *Polly*, you are so squeamishly affected about taking a cup of strong-waters, as a lady before company. I vow, *Polly*, I shall take it monstrously ill if you refuse me.—Brandy and men (though women love them never so well) are always taken by us with some reluctance—unless 'tis in private.

Polly. I protest, madam, it goes against me.—What do I see! *Macheath* again in custody!—Now every glimmering of happiness is lost.

[*Drops the glass of liquor upon the ground.*]

Lucy. Since things are thus, I'm glad the wench hath escap'd: for by this event, 'tis plain, she was not happy enough to deserve to be poison'd.

Enter Lockit, Macheath, and Peachum.

Lock. Set your heart at rest, captain.—You have neither the chance of love or money for another escape—for you are order'd to be call'd down upon your trial immediately.

Peach. Away, huffies!—This is not a time for a man to be hamper'd with his wives.—You see, the gentleman is in chains already.

Lucy. O husband, husband, my heart long'd to see thee; but to see thee thus distracts me!

Polly. Will not my dear husband look upon his *Polly*? Why hadst thou not flown to me for protection? with me thou hadst been safe.

AIR LII. The last time I went o'er the moor.

Polly. *Hitber, dear husband, turn your eyes.*

Lucy. *Bestow one glance to cheer me.*

Polly. *Think with that look, thy Polly dies.*

Lucy. *O shun me not, but hear me.*

Polly. *'Tis Polly jues.*

Lucy. *----- 'Tis Lucy speaks.*

Polly. *Is thus true love requited?*

Lucy. *My heart is bursting.*

Polly. *----- Mine too breaks.*

Lucy. *Must I,*

Polly. *----- Must I be slighted?*

Mach. What would you have me say, ladies?—
You see, this affair will soon be at an end, without
my disoblighing either of you.

Peach. But the settling this point, captain, might
prevent a law-suit between your two widows.

AIR LIII. Tom Tinker's my true love, &c.

Mach. *Which way shall I turn me—how can I decide,
Wives, the day of our death, are as fond as a bride.
One wife is too much for most husbands to bear,
But two at a time there's no mortal can bear.
This way, and that way, and which way I will,
What would comfort the one, t'other wife would
take ill.*

Polly. But if his own misfortunes have made him
insensible to mine—a father sure will be more com-
passionate.—Dear, dear sir, sink the material evidence,
and bring him off at his trial—Polly upon her knees
begs it of you.

AIR LIV. I am a poor shepherd 'undone.

*When my hero in court appears,
And stands arraign'd for his life,
Then think of poor Polly's tears;
For ah! poor Polly's his wife.
Like the sailor he holds up his hand,
Distrest on the dashing wave,
To die a dry death at land,
Is as bad as a watry grave.*

126 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

*And alas, poor Polly !
Alack, and well-a-day !
Before I was in love,
Oh ! every month was May.*

Lucy. If *Peachum's* heart is hardened ;—sure you, sir, will have more compassion on a daughter—I know the evidence is in your power.—How then can you be a tyrant to me ? [*Kneeling.*]

AIR LV. *Iantbe the lovely, &c.*

*When he holds up his hand arraign'd for his life,
O think of your daughter, and think I'm his wife !
What are cannons, or bombs, or clashing of swords ?
For death is more certain by witnesses words.
Then nail up their lips, that dread thunder allay ;
And each month of my life will hereafter be May.*

Lock. *Macheath's* time is come, *Lucy*.—We know our own affairs, therefore let us have no more whimpering or whining.

AIR LVI. A cobbler there was, &c.

*Ourselfs, like the great, to secure a retreat,
When matters require it, must give up our gang :
And good reason why,
Or instead of the fry,
Ev'n Peachum and I,
Like poor petty rascals, might bang, bang ;
Like poor petty rascals, might bang.*

Peach. Set your heart at rest, *Polly*.—Your husband is to die to-day.—Therefore, if you are not already provided, 'tis high time to look about for another. There's comfort for you, you slut.

Lock. We are ready, sir, to conduct you to the Old Baily.

AIR LVII. *Bonny Dundee.*

Mach. *The charge is prepar'd, the lawyers are met ;
The judges all rang'd (a terrible show !)
I go undismay'd,—for death is a debt,
A debt on demand,—so, take what I owe.
Then, farewell, my love,—dear charmers adieu ;
Contented I die—'tis the better for you.*

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 127

*Here ends all dispute the rest of our lives,
For this way at once I please all my wishes.*

Now, gentlemen, I am ready to attend you.

[*Exeunt* Peachum, Lockit, and Macheath.]

Polly. Follow them, *Filch*, to the court. And when the trial is over, bring me a particular account of his behaviour; and of every thing that happen'd.—You'll find me here with miss *Lucy*. [*Exit Filch.*] But why is all this mufe?

Lucy. The prisoners, whose trials are put off till next session, are diverting themselves.

Polly. Sure there is nothing so charming as music! I'm fond of it to distraction—But alas!—now all mirth seems an insult upon my affliction.—Let us retire, my dear *Lucy*, and indulge our sorrows.—The noisy crew, you see, are coming upon us. [*Exeunt.*]

A dance of prisoners in chains, &c.

SCENE, *The Condemn'd Hold.*

Macheath, in a melancholy posture.

AIR LVIII. Happy Groves.

*O cruel, cruel, cruel case!
Must I suffer this disgrace?*

AIR LIX. Of all the girls that are so smart.

*Of all the friends in time of grief,
When threat'ning death looks grimmer,
Not one so sure can bring relief,
As this best friend, a brimmer.* [Drinks.]

AIR LX. Britons, strike home.

Since I must swing,—I scorn, I scorn to wince or whine, [rises.]

AIR LXI. Chevy Chase.

*But now again my spirits sink;
I'll raise them high with wine.* [Drinks a glass of wine.]

AIR LXII. To old fir *Simon* the king.

*But valour the stronger grows,
The stronger liquor we're drinking.
And how can we feel our woes,
When we've lost the trouble of thinking?* [Drinks.

AIR LXIII. Joy to great *Cæsar*.

*If thus—A man can die
Much bolder with brandy.* [Pours out a bumper of brandy.

AIR LXIV. There was an old woman, &c.

*So I drink off this bumper—And now I can stand the test,
And my comrades shall see, that I die as brave as the best.*
[Drinks.

AIR LXV. Did you ever hear of a gallant sailor.

*But can I leave my pretty buffies,
Without one tear, or tender sigh?*

AIR LXVI. Why are mine eyes still flowing.

*Their eyes, their lips, their buffies,
Recall my love—Ah must I die?*

AIR LXVII. Green sleeves.

*Since laws were made for ev'ry degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as me,
I wonder we han't better company
Upon Tyburn tree!*

*But gold from law can take out the sting;
And if rich men like us were to swing,
'T would thin the land such numbers to string
Upon Tyburn tree.*

Jailor. Some friends of yours, captain, desire to be admitted.—I leave you together.

Enter Ben Budge, and Mat of the Mint.

Mat. For my having broke prison, you see, gentlemen, I am ordered immediate execution.—The sheriffs officers, I believe, are now at the door.—That *Jemmy Twitcher* should peach me, I own surpriz'd me!—'Tis a plain proof that the world is all alike,

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 129

and that even our gang can no more trust one another than other people. Therefore, I beg you, gentlemen, look well to yourselves, for in all probability, you may live some months longer.

Mat. We are heartily sorry, captain, for your misfortune.—But 'tis what we must all come to.

Mach. *Peachum* and *Lockit*, you know, are infamous scoundrels. Their lives are as much in your power, as yours are in theirs—Remember your dying friend!—'Tis my last request.—Bring those villains to the gallows before you, and I am satisfied.

Mat. We'll do't.

Tailor. Miss *Polly* and miss *Lucy* intreat a word with you.

Mach. Gentlemen, adieu. [Exeunt Ben Budge and Mat of the Mint.

Enter *Lucy* and *Polly*.

Mach. My dear *Lucy*—my dear *Polly*—Whatsoever hath past between us, is now at an end.—If you are fond of marrying again, the best advice I can give you, is to ship yourselves off for the *West-Indies*; where you'll have a fair chance of getting a husband a-piece; or by good luck, two or three, as you like best.

Polly. How can I support this sight!

Lucy. There is nothing moves one so much as a great man in distress.

AIR LXVIII. All you that must take a leap, &c.

Lucy. Wou'd I might be hang'd!

Polly. ----- And I would so too!

Lucy. To be hang'd with you,

Polly. ----- My dear, with you.

Mach. O leave me to thought! I fear! I doubt!

I tremble! I droop!—See my courage is out.

[Turns up the empty bottle.

Polly. No token of love?

Mach. ----- See my courage is out.

[Turns up the empty pot.

Lucy. No token of love?

Polly. ----- Adieu.

130 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Lucy. - - - - - Farewell.

Mach. But hark ! I hear the toll of the bell.

Chorus. *Tel de rol lol, &c.*

Jailer. Four women more, captain, with a child a-piece ! See, here they come. [*Enter women and children.*]

Mach. What—four wives more !—This is too much.—Here—tell the sheriff's officers I am ready.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Beggar and Player.

Play. But, honest friend, I hope you don't intend that *Macheath* shall be really executed.

Beg. Most certainly, sir.—To make the piece perfect, I was for doing strict poetical justice.—*Macheath* is to be hang'd ; and for the other personages of the drama, the audience must have supposed they were all either hang'd or transported.

Play. Why then, friend, this is a downright deep tragedy. The catastrophe is manifestly wrong, for an opera must end happily.

Beg. Your objection, sir, is very just ; and is easily removed : for you must allow, that in this kind of drama, 'tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about—So—you rabble there—run and cry a Reprieve—let the prisoner be brought back to his wives in triumph.

Play. All this we must do to comply with the taste of the town.

Beg. Through the whole piece you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life, that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen.—Had the play remain'd as I at first intended, it would have carried a most excellent moral : 'twould have shown that the lower sort of people have their vices in a degree as well as the rich ; and that they are punish'd for them.

Enter to them Macheath, with rabble, &c.

Mach. So, it seems I am not left to my choice, but must have a wife at last.—Look ye, my dears,

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 131

we will have no controversy now. Let us give this day to mirth, and I am sure she who thinks herself my wife will testify her joy by a dance.

All. Come, a dance—dance.

Mach. Ladies, I hope you will give me leave to present a partner to each of you. And (if I may without offence) for this time, I take *Polly* for mine.—And for life, you slut,—for we are really married.—As for the rest.—But at present keep your own secret.

[To *Polly*.

A D A N C E.

AIR LXIX. Lumps of Pudding, &c.

*Thus I stand like a Turk, with his dexies around;
From all sides their glances his passion confound;
For black, brown, and fair, his inconstancy burns,
And the different beauties subdue him by turns:
Each calls forth her charms, to provoke his desires:
Though willing to all; but with one he retires.
But think of this maxim, and put off all sorrow,
The wretch of to-day, may be happy to-morrow.*

Chorus. But think of this maxim, &c.

A

TABLE of the SONGS.

ACT I.

AIR

I. <i>Through all the employments of life.</i>	page 75
II. <i>'Tis woman that seduces all mankind.</i>	76
III. <i>If any wench Venus's girdle wear.</i>	78
IV. <i>If love the virgin's heart invade.</i>	79
V. <i>A maid is like the golden ore.</i>	80
VI. <i>Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre.</i>	82
VII. <i>Our Polly is a sad slut ! nor beads what we have taught her.</i>	ib.
VIII. <i>Can love be controul'd by advice ?</i>	84
IX. <i>O Polly, you might have toy'd and kist.</i>	85
X. <i>I, like a ship in storms, was tost.</i>	ib.
XI. <i>A fox may steal your hens, sir.</i>	86
XII. <i>Oh, ponder well ! be not severe.</i>	88
XIII. <i>The turtle thus with plaintive crying.</i>	ib.
XIV. <i>Pretty Polly, say.</i>	90
XV. <i>My heart was so free.</i>	ib.
XVI. <i>Were I laid on Greenland's coast.</i>	ib.
XVII. <i>O what pain it is to part !</i>	91
XVIII. <i>The miser thus a shilling sees.</i>	92

ACT II.

XIX. <i>Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us.</i>	93
XX. <i>Let us take the road.</i>	94
XXI. <i>If the heart of a man is deprest with cares.</i>	95
XXII. <i>Youth's the season made for joys.</i>	96
XXIII. <i>Before the barn-door crowing.</i>	98
XXIV. <i>The gamesters and lawyers are jugglers alike.</i>	99
XXV. <i>At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure.</i>	100
XXVI. <i>Man may escape from rope and gun.</i>	101

A TABLE OF THE AIRS. 133

AIR

XXVII. <i>Thus when a good buswife sees a rat.</i>	102.
XXVIII. <i>How cruel are the traitors.</i>	103.
XXIX. <i>The first time at the looking-glass.</i>	104.
XXX. <i>When you censure the age.</i>	105.
XXXI. <i>Is then his fate decreed, sir?</i>	106.
XXXII. <i>You'll think, ere many days ensue.</i>	107.
XXXIII. <i>If you at an office solicit your due.</i>	ib.
XXXIV. <i>Thus when the swallow, seeking prey.</i>	108.
XXXV. <i>How happy could I be with either.</i>	109.
XXXVI. <i>I'm bubbled.</i>	ib.
XXXVII. <i>Cease your funning.</i>	110.
XXXVIII. <i>Why bow now, madam Flirt.</i>	ib.
XXXIX. <i>No power on earth can e'er divide.</i>	111.
XL. <i>I like the fox shall grieve.</i>	112.

A C T III.

XLI. <i>When young at the bar you first taught me to score.</i>	113.
XLII. <i>My love is all madness and folly.</i>	114.
XLIII. <i>Thus gamesters united in friendship, &c</i>	115.
XLIV. <i>The modes of the court so common are grown.</i>	116.
XLV. <i>What gudgeons are we men!</i>	118.
XLVI. <i>In the days of my youth, I could bill like a dove, fa, la, la, &c.</i>	119.
XLVII. <i>I'm like a skiff on the ocean tost.</i>	121.
XLVIII. <i>When a wife's in her pout.</i>	122.
XLIX. <i>A curse attends that woman's love.</i>	123.
L. <i>Among the men, coquets we find.</i>	ib.
LI. <i>Come, sweet last.</i>	ib.
LII. <i>Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes.</i>	125.
LIII. <i>Which way shall I turn me?</i>	ib.
LIV. <i>When my hero in court appears.</i>	ib.
LV. <i>When he holds up his hand, arraign'd for his life.</i>	126.
LVI. <i>Ourselves, like the great, to secure a retreat.</i>	ib.
LVII. <i>The charge is prepar'd, the lawyers are met.</i>	ib.
LVIII. <i>O cruel, cruel, cruel case.</i>	127.

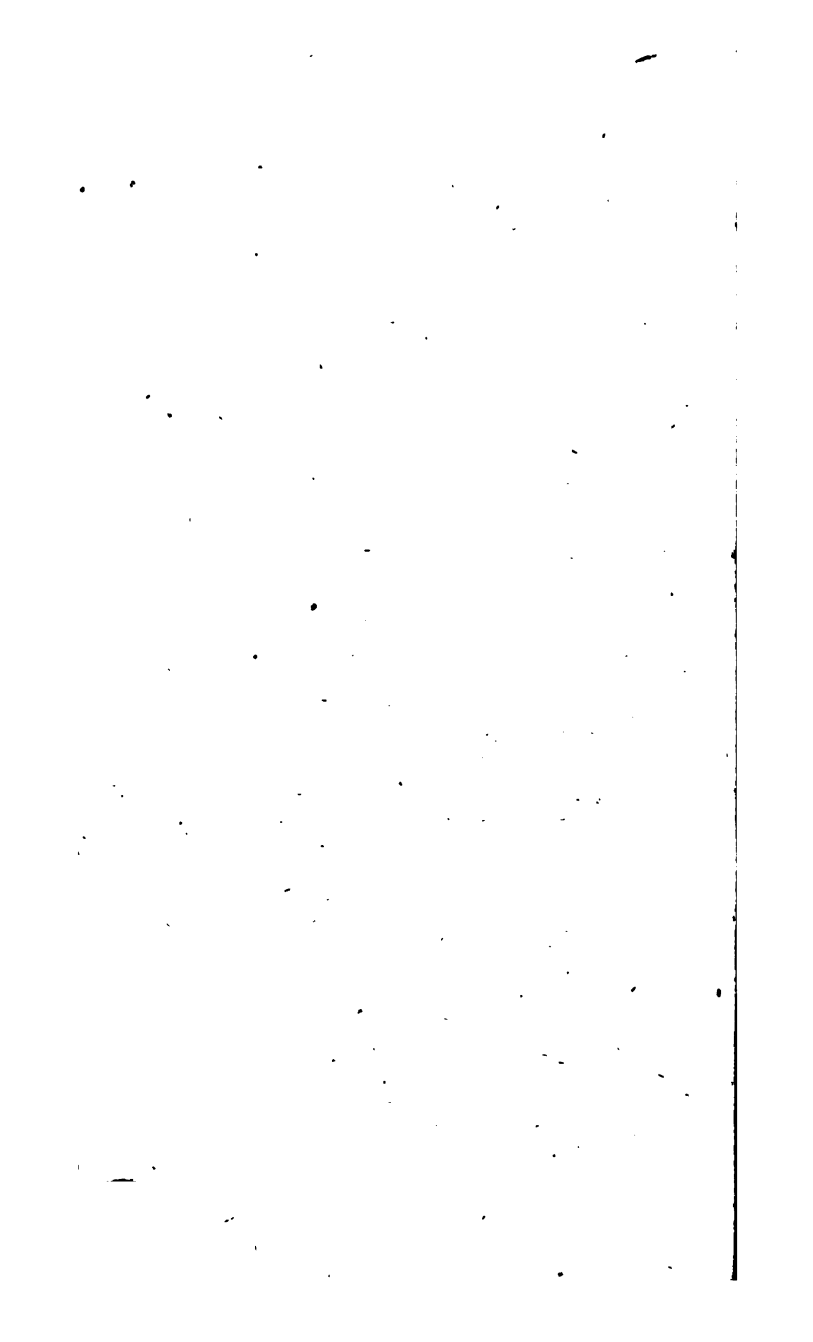
134 A TABLE OF THE AIRS.

AIR

- | | |
|--|-----|
| LIX. <i>Of all the friends in time of grief.</i> | 127 |
| LX. <i>Since I must swing,—I scorn, I scorn to wince
or whine.</i> | ib. |
| LXI. <i>But now again my spirits sink.</i> | ib. |
| LXII. <i>But valour the stronger grows.</i> | 128 |
| LXIII. <i>If thus—A man can die.</i> | ib. |
| LXIV. <i>So I drink off this bumper.—And now I
can stand the test.</i> | ib. |
| LXV. <i>But can I leave my pretty buffes.</i> | ib. |
| LXVI. <i>Their eyes, their lips, their buffes.</i> | ib. |
| LXVII. <i>Since laws were made for ev'ry degree.</i> | ib. |
| LXVIII. <i>Wou'd I might be hang'd!</i> | 129 |
| LXIX. <i>Thus I stand like a Turk, with his doxies
around.</i> | 131 |

P O L L Y:
A N O P E R A.
BEING THE SECOND PART
OF THE
BEGGAR'S O P E R A.

*Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deferuit pede poena claudo.* **HOR.**



P R E F A C E.

AFTER Mr. *Rich* and I were agreed upon terms and conditions for bringing this piece on the stage, and that every thing was ready for rehearsal, the lord chamberlain sent an order from the country to prohibit Mr. *Rich* to suffer any play to be rehearsed upon his stage till it had been first of all supervised by his grace. As soon as Mr. *Rich* came from his grace's secretary (who had sent for him to receive the before-mentioned order) he came to my lodgings and acquainted me with the orders he had received.

Upon the lord chamberlain's coming to town, I was confin'd by sickness, but in four or five days I went abroad on purpose to wait upon his grace, with a faithful and genuine copy of this piece, excepting the errata of the transcriber.

As I have heard several suggestions and false insinuations concerning the copy; I take this occasion in the most solemn manner to affirm, that the very copy I delivered to Mr. *Rich*, was written in my own hand, some months before, at the *Bath*, from my own first foul blotted papers; from this, that for the Playhouse was transcribed, from whence Mr. *Stede*, the prompter, copied that which I delivered to the lord chamberlain: and, excepting my own foul blotted papers, I do protest I know of no other copy whatsoever, than those I have mentioned.

The copy which I gave into the hands of Mr. *Rich* had been seen before by several persons of the greatest distinction and veracity, who will be ready to do me the honour and justice to attest it; so that not only by them, but by Mr. *Rich* and Mr. *Stede*, I can (against

all insinuation or positive affirmation) prove in the most clear and undeniable manner, if occasion required, what I have here upon my own honour and credit asserted. The Introduction indeed was not shown to the lord chamberlain, which, as I had not then quite settled, was never transcribed in the playhouse copy.

It was on *Saturday* morning, *December* 7th, 1728, that I waited upon the lord chamberlain; I desired to have the honour of reading the opera to his grace, but he ordered me to leave it with him, which I did, upon expectation of having it returned on the *Monday* following; but I had it not till *Thursday*, *December* 12, when I received it from his grace with this answer; "*that it was not allowed to be acted, but commanded to be suppressed.*" This was told me in general, without any reasons assigned, or any charge against me of my having given any particular offence.

Since this prohibition I have been told, that I am accused, in general terms, of having written many disaffected libels and seditious pamphlets. As it hath ever been my utmost ambition (if that word may be used upon this occasion) to lead a quiet and inoffensive life, I thought my innocence in this particular would never have required a justification; and as this kind of writing is what I have ever detested, and never practised, I am persuaded so groundless a calumny can never be believed, but by those who do not know me. But as general aspersions of this sort have been cast upon me, I think myself called upon to declare my principles; and I do, with the strictest truth, affirm, that I am as loyal a subject and as firmly attached to the present happy establishment, as any of those who have the greatest places or pensions. I have been informed too, that, in the following play, I have been charged with writing immoralities; that it is filled with slander and calumny against particular great persons; and that majesty itself is endeavoured to be brought into ridicule and contempt.

As I knew that every one of these charges was in every point absolutely false and without the least

grounds, at first I was not at all affected by them; but when I found they were still insisted upon, and that particular passages, which were not in the play, were quoted and propagated to support what had been suggested, I could no longer bear to lie under these false accusations; so by printing it, I have submitted and given up all present views of profit which might accrue from the stage, which undoubtedly will be some satisfaction to the worthy gentlemen who have treated me with so much candour and humanity, and represented me in such favourable colours.

But as I am conscious to myself, that my only intention was to lash, in general, the reigning and fashionable vices, and to recommend and set virtue in as amiable a light as I could; to justify and vindicate my own character, I thought myself obliged to print the Opera without delay in the manner I have done.

As the play was principally designed for representation, I hope, when it is read, it will be considered in that light: and when all that hath been said against it shall appear to be entirely misunderstood or misrepresented; if, some time hence, it should be permitted to appear on the stage, I think it necessary to acquaint the public, that, as far as a contract of this kind can be binding, I am engaged to Mr. *Rich* to have it represented upon his theatre.

March 25, 1729.

INTRODUCTION.

POET, PLAYER.

POET.

A Sequel to a play is like more last words. It is a kind of absurdity ; and really, sir, you have prevailed upon me to pursue this subject against my judgment.

1st Player. Be the success as it will, you are sure of what you have contracted for ; and upon the inducement of gain, nobody can blame you for undertaking it.

Poet. I know, I must have been looked upon as whimsical, and particular, if I had scrupled to have risked my reputation for my profit ; for why should I be more squeamish than my betters ? and so, sir, contrary to my opinion I bring *Polly* once again upon the stage.

1st Player. Consider, sir, you have prepossession on your side.

Poet. But then the pleasure of novelty is lost ; and in a thing of this kind, I am afraid I shall hardly be pardoned for imitating myself ; for sure, pieces of this sort are not to be followed as precedents. My dependence, like a tricking bookseller's, is that the kind reception the first part met with, will carry off the second, be it what it will.

1st Play. You should not disparage your own works ; you will have critics enough who will be glad to do that for you : and let me tell you, sir, after the success you have had, you must expect envy.

Poet. Since I have had more applause than I can deserve, I must, with other authors, be content, if critics allow me less. I should be an arrant courtier,

or an arrant beggar indeed, if as soon as I have received one undeserved favour, I should lay claim to another; I do not flatter myself with the like success.

1st Player. I hope, sir, in the catastrophe you have not run into the absurdity of your last piece.

Poet. I know that I have been unjustly accused of having given up my moral for a joke, like a fine gentleman in conversation; but whatever be the event now, I will not so much as seem to give up my moral.

1st Player. Really, sir, an author should comply with the customs and taste of the town.—I am indeed afraid too that your satire here and there is too free. A man should be cautious how he mentions any vice whatsoever before good company, lest somebody present should apply it to himself.

Poet. The stage, sir, hath the privilege of the pulpit, to attack vice however dignified or distinguished; and preachers and poets should not be too well bred upon these occasions: nobody can overdo it when he attacks the vice and not the person.

1st Player. But how can you hinder malicious applications?

Poet. Let those answer for them who make them. I aim at no particular persons; my strokes are at vice in general; but if any men particularly vicious are hurt, I make no apology, but leave them to the cure of their flatterers. If an author write in character, the lower people reflect on the follies and vices of the rich and great, and an *Indian* judges and talks of *Europeans*, by those he hath seen and conversed with, &c. And I will venture to own, that I wish every man of power or riches were really and apparently virtuous; which would soon amend and reform the common people, who act by imitation.

1st Player. But a little indulgence and partiality to the vices of your own country, without doubt would be looked upon as more discreet. Though your satire, sir, is on vices in general, it must and will give offence; every vicious man thinks you particular, for conscience will make self-application. And why will you make yourself so many enemies? I say no more upon this head. As to us, I hope you are satisfied we

have done all we could for you ; for you will now have the advantage of all our best fingers.

Enter 2d Player.

2d Player. It is impossible to perform the opera to night, all the fine fingers within are out of humour with their parts. The tenor says, he was never offered such an indignity, and in a rage flung his clean lamb-skin gloves into the fire ; he swears that in his whole life he never did sing, would sing, or could sing, but in true kid.

1st Player. Music might tame and civilize wild beasts, but it is evident it never yet could tame and civilize musicians.

Enter 3d Player.

3d Player. Sir, signora Crotchetta says, she finds her character so low that she had rather die than sing it.

1st Player. Tell her by her contract I can make her sing it.

Enter signora Crotchetta.

Crotchetta. Barbarous tramontane ! Where are all the lovers of virtue ? Will they not all rise in arms in my defence ? Make me sing it ! good gods ! should I tamely submit to such usage, I should debase myself through all Europe.

1st Player. In the opera nine or ten years ago, I remember, madam, your appearance in a character little better than a fish.

Crotchetta. A fish ! monstrous ! Let me inform you, sir, that a mermaid or syren is not many removes from a sea-goddes ; or I had never submitted to be that fish which you are pleased to call me, by way of reproach. I have a cold, sir ; I am sick. I do not see why I may not be allowed the privilege of sickness now and then as well as others. If a finger may not be indulged in her humours, I am sure she will soon become of no consequence with the town. And so, sir, I have told ; I am hoarse. I hope now you are satisfied.

INTRODUCTION. 143

Enter 4th Player.

4th Player. Sir, the base voice insists upon pearl-coloured stockings and red-heeled shoes.

1st Player. There is no governing caprice. But how shall we make our excuses to the house?

4th Player. Since the town was last year so good as to encourage an opera without fingers; the favour I was then shewn obliges me to offer myself once more, rather than the audience should be dismissed. All the other comedians upon this emergency are willing to do their best, and hope for your favour and indulgence.

1st Player. Ladies and gentlemen, as we wish to do every thing for your diversion, and that fingers only will come when they will come, we beg you to excuse this unforeseen accident, and to accept the proposal of the comedians, who rely wholly on your courtesy and protection.

[Exeunt.]

THE OVERTURE.

Dramatis Personæ.

Mr. Ducat, a West-Indian planter.

Morana (*alias* Macheath) captain of the pirates.

Vanderbluff,

Capstern,

Hacker,

Culverin,

Laguerre,

Cutlace,

Pohetohee, an Indian king.

Cawwawkee, his son.

} Pirates.

Servants, Indians, Pirates, Guards, &c.

Polly Peachum.

Mrs. Ducat.

Diana Trapes.

Jenny Di er.

Flimzy.

Damaris.

} *Servants to Trapes.*

S C E N E, *in the West-Indies.*

P O L L Y:

A N O P E R A.

A C T I.

SCENE, Ducat's House.

Ducat, Trapes.

TRAPES.

THOUGH you were born and bred and live in the *Indies*, as you are a subject of *Britain* you should live up to our customs. Prodigality there, is a fashion that is among all ranks of people. Why, our very younger brothers push themselves into the polite world by squandering more than they are worth. You are wealthy, very wealthy, Mr. *Ducat*; and I grant you, the more you have, the taste of getting more should grow stronger upon you. 'Tis just so with us. But then the richest of our lords and gentlemen, who live elegantly, always run out. 'Tis genteel to be in debt. Your luxury should distinguish you from the vulgar. You cannot be too expensive in your pleasures.

AIR I. The disappointed widow.

The manners of the great affect:

Stint not your pleasure:

If conscience had their genius checkt,

How got they treasure?

*The more in debt, run in debt the more,
 Careless who is undone :
 Morals and honesty leave to the poor,
 As they do at London.*

Ducat. I never thought to have heard thrift laid to my charge. There is not a man, though I say it, in the whole *Indies* who lives more plentifully than myself; nor who enjoys the necessaries of life in so handsome a manner.

Trapes. There it is now. Who ever heard a man of fortune in *England* talk of the necessaries of life? If the necessaries of life would have satisfied such a poor body as me, to be sure I had never come to mend my fortune to the plantations. Whether we can afford it or no, we must have superfluities. We never stint our expence to our own fortunes, but are miserable if we do not live up to the profuseness of our neighbours. If we could content ourselves with the necessaries of life, no man alive ever need be dishonest. As to woman now; why, look ye, Mr. *Ducat*, a man hath what we may call every thing that is necessary in a wife.

Ducat. Ay, and more!

Trapes. But for all that, d'ye see, you married men are my best customers. It keeps wives upon their good behaviour.

Ducat. But there are jealousies and family lectures, Mrs. *Trapes*.

Trapes. Bless us all! how little are our customs known on this side the herring-pond! Why, jealousy is out of fashion even among our common country gentlemen. I hope you are better bred than to be jealous. A husband and wife should have a mutual complaisance for each other. Sure, your wife is not so unreasonable to expect to have you always to herself.

Ducat. As I have a good estate, Mrs. *Trapes*, I would willingly run into every thing that is suitable to my dignity and fortune. Nobody throws himself into the extravagancies of life with a freer spirit. As to conscience and musty morals, I have as few drawbacks upon my profits or pleasures as any man of quality in *England*; in those I am not in the least vulgar. Besides,

madam, in most of my expences I run into the polite taste. I have a fine library of books that I never read ; I have a fine stable of horses that I never ride ; I build, I buy plate, jewels, pictures, or any thing that is valuable and curious, as your great men do, merely out of ostentation. But indeed I must own, I do still cohabit with my wife ; and she is very uneasy and vexatious upon account of my visits to you.

Trapes. Indeed, indeed, Mr. *Ducat*, you should break through all this usurpation at once, and keep.— Now too is your time ; for I have a fresh cargo of ladies just arrived : nobody alive shall set eyes upon 'em till you have provided yourself. You should keep your lady in awe by her maid ; place a handsome, sprightly wench near your wife, and she will be a spy upon her into the bargain. I would have you show yourself a fine gentleman in every thing.

Ducat. But I am somewhat advanc'd in life, Mrs. *Trapes*, and my duty to my wife lies very hard upon me ; I must leave keeping to younger husbands and old bachelors.

Trapes. There it is again now ! Our very vulgar pursue pleasures in the flush of youth and inclination, but our great men are modishly profligate when their appetite hath left them.

A I R II. The Irish ground.

B A S S.

Ducat. *What can wealth
When we're old ?
Youth and health
Are not sold.*

T R E B L E.

Trapes. *When love in the pulse beats low,
(As haply it may with you)
A girl can fresh youth bestow,
And kindle desire anew.
Thus, numb'd in the brake,
Without motion, the snake*

*Sleeps cold winter away:
But in every vein
Life quickens again
On the bosom of May.*

We are not here, I must tell you, as we are at *London*, where we can have fresh goods every week by the waggon. My maid is again gone aboard the vessel; she is perfectly charmed with one of the ladies; it will be a credit to you to keep her. I have obligations to you, Mr. *Ducat*, and I would part with her to no man alive but yourself. If I had her at *London*, such a lady would be sufficient to make my fortune; but, in truth, she is not impudent enough to make herself agreeable to the sailors in a public house in this country. By all accounts, she hath a behaviour only fit for a private family.

Ducat. But how shall I manage matters with my wife?

Trapes. Just as the fine gentlemen do with us. We could bring you many great precedents for treating a wife with indifference, contempt, and neglect; but that, indeed, would be running into too high life. I would have you keep some decency, and use her with civility. You should be so obliging as to leave her to her liberties, and take them to yourself. Why, all our fine ladies, in what they call pin-money, have no other views; it is what they all expect.

Ducat. But I am afraid it will be hard to make my wife think like a gentlewoman upon this subject; so that if I take her, I must act discreetly and keep the affair a dead secret.

Trapes. As to that, sir, you may do as you please. Should it ever come to her knowledge, custom and education perhaps may make her at first think it somewhat odd. But this I can affirm with a safe conscience, that many a lady of quality have servants of this sort in their families, and you can afford an expence as well as the best of them.

Ducat. I have a fortune, Mrs. *Trapes*, and would fain make a fashionable figure in life; if we can agree upon the price, I'll take her into the family.

POLLY: AN OPERA. 149

Trapes. I am glad to see you fling yourself into the polite taste with a spirit. Few, indeed, have the turn or talents to get money; but fewer know how to spend it handsomely after they have got it. The elegance of luxury consists in variety, and love requires it as much as any of our appetites and passions, and there is a time of life when a man's appetite ought to be whetted by a delicacy.

Ducat. Nay, Mrs. *Trapes*, now you are too hard upon me. Sure, you cannot think me such a clown as to be really in love with my wife! We are not so ignorant here as you imagine; why, I married her in a reasonable way, only for her money.

A I R III. Noel Hills.

*He that weds a beauty
Soon will find her cloy;
When pleasure grows a duty,
Farewell love and joy:
He that weds for treasure
(Though he hath a wife)
Hath chose one lasting pleasure
In a married life.*

Enter Damaris.

Damaris, [calling at the door] *Damaris*, I charge you not to stir from the door, and the instant you see your lady at a distance, returning from her walk, be sure to give me notice.

Trapes. She is in most charming rigging; she won't cost you a penny, fir, in clothes at first setting out. But, alack-a-day! no bargain could ever thrive with dry lips: a glass of liquor makes every thing go so glibly.

Ducat. Here, *Damaris*; a glass of rum for Mrs. *Dye*.

[*Damaris goes out, and returns with a bottle and glass.*]

Trapes. But as I was saying, fir, I would not part with her to any body alive but yourself; for, to be sure, I could turn her to ten times the profit by jobs and chance customers. Come, fir, here's to the young lady's health.

Enter Flimzy.

Trapes. Well, *Flimzy*; are all the ladies safely landed, and have you done as I ordered you?

Flimzy. Yes, madam. The three ladies for the run of the house are safely lodg'd at home; the other is without in the hall to wait your commands. She is a most delicious creature, that's certain. Such lips, such eyes, and such flesh and blood! If you had her in *London* you could not fail of the custom of all the foreign ministers. As I hope to be sav'd, madam, I was forc'd to tell her ten thousand lies before I could prevail upon her to come with me. Oh sir, you are the most lucky, happy man in the world! Shall I go call her in?

Trapes. 'Tis necessary for me first to instruct her in her duty and the ways of the family. The girl is bashful and modest, so I must beg leave to prepare her by a little private conversation; and afterwards, sir, I shall leave you to your private conversations.

Flimzy. But, I hope, sir, you won't forget poor *Flimzy*; for the richest man alive could not be more scrupulous than I am upon these occasions, and the bribe only can make me excuse it to my conscience. I hope, sir, you will pardon my freedom. [*He gives her money.*]

A I R IV. Sweetheart, think upon me.

My conscience is of courtly mold,

Fit for highest station.

Where's the hand, when touch'd with gold,

Proof against temptation? [*Ex. Flimzy.*]

Ducat. We can never sufficiently encourage such useful qualifications. You will let me know when you are ready for me. [*Exit.*]

Trapes. I wonder I am not more wealthy; for, o' my conscience, I have as few scruples as those that are ten thousand times as rich. But, alack-a-day! I am forc'd to play at small game. I now and then betray and ruin an innocent girl. And what of that? Can I in conscience expect to be equally rich with those who

betray and ruin provinces and countries? In troth, all their great fortunes are owing to situation; as for genius and capacity I can match them to a hair: were they in my circumstance, they would act like me; were I in theirs, I should be rewarded as a most profound penetrating politician.

A I R V. 'Twas within a furlong.

*In pimps and politicians
The genius is the same;
Both raise their own conditions
On others guilt and shame:
With a tongue well-tipt with lyes
Each the want of parts supplies,
And with a heart that's all disguise,
Keeps his schemes unknown.
Seducing as the devil,
They play the tempter's part,
And have, when most they're civil;
Most mischief in their heart.
Each a secret commerce drives,
First corrupts and then connives,
And by his neighbours vices thrives,
For they are all his own.*

Enter Flimzy and Polly.

Trapes. Bless my eye-sight! what do I see? I am in a dream, or it is miss *Polly Peachum*! mercy upon me! child, what brought you on this side of the water?

Polly. Love, madam, and the misfortunes of our family. But I am equally surprized to find an acquaintance here: you cannot be ignorant of my unhappy story, and perhaps from you, *Mrs. Dye*, I may receive some information that may be useful to me.

Trapes. You need not be much concern'd, miss *Polly*, at a sentence of transportation, for a young lady of your beauty hath wherewithal to make her fortune in any country.

Polly. Pardon me, madam; you mistake me. Tho' I was educated among the most profligate in low-life, I never engag'd in my father's affairs as a thief or

thief-catcher, for indeed I abhor'd his profession. Would my papa had never taken it up, he then still had been alive, and I had never known *Macbeath*!

AIR VI. *Sortez des vos retraites.*

*She who hath felt a real pain
By Cupid's dart,
Finds that all absence is in vain
To cure her heart.
Though from my lover cast
Far as from pole to pole,
Still the pure flame must last,
For love is in the soul.*

You must have heard, madam, that I was unhappy in my marriage. When *Macbeath* was transported, all my peace was banished with him; and my papa's death hath now given me liberty to pursue my inclinations.

Trapes. Good lack-a-day! poor Mr. *Peacbum*! Death was so much oblig'd to him, that I wonder he did not allow him a reprieve for his own sake. Truly, I think, he was obliged to no-body more, except the physicians: but they die it seems too. Death is very impartial; he takes all alike, friends and foes.

Polly. Every monthly sessions-paper, like the apothecary's files (if I may make the comparison) was a record of his services. But my papa kept company with gentlemen, and ambition is catching. He was in too much haste to be rich. I wish all great men would take warning. 'Tis now seven months since my papa was hang'd.

Trapes. This will be a great check indeed to young men of enterprising genius; and it will be unsafe to push at making a great fortune, if such accidents grow common. But sure, child, you are not so mad as to think of following *Macbeath*.

Polly. In following him I am in pursuit of my quiet. I love him; and, like a troubled ghost, shall never be at rest till I appear to him. If I can receive any information of him from you, it will be a cordial to a wretch in despair.

Trapes. My dear miss *Polly*, you must not think of

It 'Tis now above a year and a half since he robb'd his master, ran away from the plantation, and turn'd pirate. Then too what puts you beyond all possibility of redress, is, that since he came over he married a transported slave, one *Jenny Diver*, and she is gone off with him. You must give over all thoughts of him, for he is a very devil to our sex; not a woman of the greatest vivacity shifts her inclinations half so fast as he can. Besides, he would disown you; for, like an upstart, he hates an old acquaintance. I am sorry to see those tears, child, but I love you too well to flatter you.

Polly. Why have I a heart so constant? cruel love!

AIR VII. O Waly, Waly, up the bank.

Farewell, farewell, all hopes of bliss!

For Polly always must be thine.

Shall then my heart be ever his,

Which never can again be mine?

O love, you play a cruel part,

Thy shaft still festers in the wound;

You should reward a constant heart,

Since 'tis, alas, so seldom found!

Trapes. I tell you once again, miss *Polly*, you must think no more of him. You are like a child who is crying after a butterfly, that is hopping and fluttering upon every flower in the field; there is not a woman that comes in his way, but he must have a taste of; besides, there is no catching him. But, my dear girl, I hope you took care, at your leaving *England*, to bring off wherewithal to support you.

Polly. Since he is lost, I am insensible of every other misfortune. I brought indeed a sum of money with me, but my chest was broke open at sea, and I am now a wretched vagabond expos'd to hunger and want, unless charity relieve me.

Trapes. Poor child! your father and I have had great dealings together, and I shall be grateful to his memory. I will look upon you as my daughter; you shall be with me.

Polly. As soon as I can have remittances from *England*, I shall be able to acknowledge your goodness:

I have still five hundred pounds there, which will be return'd to me upon demand; but I had rather undertake any honest service that might afford me a maintenance than be burthensome to my friends.

Trapes. Sure never any thing happen'd so luckily! madam *Ducat* just now wants a servant, and I know she will take my recommendation; and one so tight and handy as you, must please her: then too, her husband is the civilest, best-bred man alive. You are now in her house, and I won't leave it till I have settled you. Be chearful, my dear child, for who knows but all these misfortunes may turn to your advantage? You are in a rich agreeable family, and I dare say your person and behaviour will soon make you a favourite. As to captain *Macheath*, you may now safely look upon yourself as a widow; and who knows, if madam *Ducat* should tip off, what may happen? I shall recommend you, miss *Polly*, as a gentlewoman.

AIR VIII. O *Jenny*, come tie me:

Despair is all folly;

Hence, melancholy,

Fortune attends you while youth is in flower;

By beauty's possession

Us'd with discretion,

Woman at all times hath joy in her power.

Polly. The service, madam, you offer me, makes me as happy as I can be in my circumstance, and I accept of it with ten thousand obligations.

Trapes. Take a turn in the hall with my maid for a minute or two, and I'll take care to settle all matters and conditions for your reception. Be assur'd, miss *Polly*, I'll do my best for you. [*Exeunt Polly and Flimzy.*]

Enter Ducat.

Trapes. Mr. *Ducat.* Sir. You may come in. I have had this very girl in my eye for you ever since you and I were first acquainted; and, to be plain with you, sir, I have run great risques for her: I had many a stratagem, to be sure, to inveigle her away from her relations! she too herself was exceeding difficult. And I can assure you, to ruin a girl of severe education is no

small addition to the pleasure of our fine gentlemen. I can be answerable for it too, that you will have the first of her. I am sure I could have disposed of her upon the same account, for at least a hundred guineas to an alderman of *London*; and then too I might have had the disposal of her again as soon as she was out of keeping; but you are my friend, and I shall not deal hard with you.

Ducat. But if I like her I would agree upon terms beforehand; for should I grow fond of her, I know you have the conscience of other trades-people, and would grow more imposing; and I love to be upon a certainty.

Trapes. Sure you cannot think a hundred pistoles too much; I mean for me. I leave her wholly to your generosity. Why your fine men, who never pay any body else, pay their pimps and bawds well; always ready money. I ever dealt conscientiously, and set the lowest price upon my ladies; when you see her, I am sure you will allow her to be as choice a piece of beauty as ever you laid eyes on.

Ducat. But, dear Mrs. *Dye*, a hundred pistoles, say you? why, I could have half a dozen negro princesses for the price.

Trapes. But sure you cannot expect to buy a fine handsome Christian at that rate. You are not us'd to see such goods on this side of the water. For the women, like the clothes, are all tarnished and half worn out before they are sent hither. Do but cast your eye upon her, sir; the door stands half open; see, yonder she trips in conversation with my maid *Flimsy* in the hall.

Ducat. Why truly I must own she is handsome.

Trapes. Bless me; you are no more mov'd by her, than if she were your wife. Handsome! what a cold husband-like expression is that! nay, there is no harm done. If I take her home, I don't question the making more money of her. She was never in any body's house but your own, since she was landed. She is pure as she was imported, without the least adulteration.

Ducat. I'll have her. I'll pay you down upon the

nail. You shall leave her with me. Come, count your money, *Mrs. Dye*.

Trapes. What a shape is there! she's of the finest growth.

Ducat. You make me mis-reckon. She even takes off my eyes from gold.

Trapes. What a curious pair of sparkling eyes!

Ducat. As vivifying as the sun. I have paid you ten.

Trapes. What a racy flavour must breathe from those lips!

Ducat. I want no provoking commendations. I'm in youth; I'm on fire! Twenty more makes it thirty; and this here makes it just fifty.

Trapes. What a most inviting complexion! how charming a colour! In short, a fine woman has all the perfections of fine wine, and is a cordial that is ten times as restorative.

Ducat. This fifty then makes it just the sum. So now, madam, you may deliver her up.

Enter Damaris.

Damaris. Sir, sir, my mistress is just at the door. [*Ex*.

Ducat. Get you out of the way this moment, dear *Mrs. Dye*; for I would not have my wife see you. But don't stir out of the house 'till I am put in possession. I'll get rid of her immediately. [*Ex. Trapes*.

Enter Mrs. Ducat.

Mrs. Ducat. I can never be out of the way, for an hour or so, but you are with that filthy creature. If you were young, and I took liberties, you could not use me worse; you could not, you beastly fellow. Such usage might force the most virtuous woman to repentment. I don't see why the wives in this country should not put themselves upon as easy a foot as in *England*. In short, *Mr. Ducat*, if you behave yourself like an *English* husband, I will behave myself like an *English* wife.

AIR IX. Red House.

*I will have my humours, I'll please all my senses,
I will not be stinted—in love or expences.*

*I'll dress with profusion, I'll game without measure;
You shall have the business, I will have the pleasure:*

*Thus every day I'll pass my life,
My home shall be my least resort;
For sure 'tis fitting that your wife
Shou'd copy ladies of the court.*

Ducat. All these things I know are natural to the sex, my dear. But husbands, like colts, are restif, and they require a long time to break 'em. Besides, 'tis not the fashion as yet, for husbands to be govern'd in this country. That tongue of your's, my dear, hath not eloquence enough to persuade me out of my reason. A woman's tongue, like a trumpet, only serves to raise my courage.

AIR X. Old Orpheus tickl'd, &c.

*When billows come breaking on the strand,
The rocks are deaf and unshaken stand:
Old oaks can defy the thunder's roar,
And I can stand woman's tongue—that's more.
With a twinkum, twankum, &c.*

With that weapon, women, like pirates, are at war with the whole world. But, I thought, my dear, your pride would have kept you from being jealous. 'Tis the whole business of my life to please you; but wives are like children, the more they are flatter'd and humour'd, the more perverse they are. Here now have I been laying out my money, purely to make you a present, and I have nothing but these freaks and reproaches in return. You wanted a maid, and I have bought you the handiest creature; she will indeed make a very creditable servant.

Mrs. Ducat. I will have none of your huffies about me. And so, sir, you would make me your convenience, your bawd. Out upon it!

Ducat. But I bought her on purpose for you, madam.

Mrs. Ducat. For your own filthy inclinations, you mean. I won't bear it. What keep an impudent strumpet under my nose! Here's fine doings, indeed!

Ducat. I will have the directions of my family. 'Tis my pleasure it shall be so. So, madam, be satisfy'd.

AIR XI. Christ-Church Bells.

*When a woman jealous grows,
Farewell all peace of life!*

*Mrs. Ducat. But ere man roves, he should pay what he
owes,*

And with her due content his wife.

Ducat. 'Tis man's the weaker sex to sway.

Mrs. Ducat. We too, whene'er we list, obey.

Ducat. 'Tis just and fit

You should submit.

Mrs. Ducat. But sweet kind husband—not to day.

Ducat. Let your clack be still.

Mrs. Ducat. Not 'till I have my will.

If thus you reason slight,

There's never an hour

While breath has power,

But I will assert my right.

Would I had you in *England*; I should have all the women there rise in arms in my defence. For the honour and prerogative of the sex, they would not suffer such a precedent of submission. And so, *Mr. Ducat*, I tell you once again, that you shall keep your trollops out of the house, or I will not stay in it.

Ducat. Look'ee, wife; you will be able to bring about nothing by pouting and vapours. I have resolution enough to withstand either obstinacy or stratagem. And I will break this jealous spirit of your's before it gets a head. And so, my dear, I order, that upon my account, you behave yourself to the girl as you ought.

Mrs. Ducat. I wish you would behave yourself to your wife as you ought; that is to say, with good manners, and compliance. And so, sir, I leave you and your minx together. I tell you once again, that I would sooner die upon the spot, than not be mistress of my own house. [*Exit, in a passion.*]

Ducat. If by these perverse humours, I should be forc'd to part with her, and allow her a separate maintenance; the thing is so common among people of condition, that it could not prove to my discredit. Family divisions, and matrimonial controversies are a

kind of proof of a man's riches; for the poor people are happy in marriage out of necessity, because they cannot afford to disagree. [*Enter Damaris.*] *Damaris*, saw you my wife? Is she in her own room? What said she? Which way went she?

Damaris. Bless me, I was perfectly frighten'd, she look'd so like a fury! Thank my stars, I never saw her look so before in all my life; tho' mayhap you may have seen her look so before a thousand times. Woe be to the servants that fall in her way! I'm sure I'm glad to be out of it.

AIR XII. *Cheshire-rouds.*

*When kings by their buffing
Have blown up a squabble,
All the charge and cuffing
Light upon the rabble.
Thus when man and wife
By their mutual snubbing,
Kindle civil strife,
Servants get the drubbing.*

Ducat. I would have you, *Damaris*, have an eye upon your mistress. You should have her good at heart, and inform me when she has any schemes a-foot; it may be the means to reconcile us.

Damaris. She's wild, sir. There's no speaking to her. She's flown into the garden! Mercy upon us all, say I! How can you be so unreasonable to contradict a woman, when you know we can't bear it?

Ducat. I depend upon you, *Damaris*, for intelligence. You may observe her at a distance; and as soon as she comes into her own room, bring me word. There is the sweetest pleasure in the revenge that I have now in my head! I'll this instant go and take my charge from Mrs. *Tapes*. [*Aside.*] *Damaris*, you know your instructions. [*Exit.*]

Damaris. Sure all masters and mistresses, like politicians, judge of the conscience of mankind by their own, and require treachery of their servants as a duty! I am employ'd by my master to watch my mistress, and by my mistress to watch my master. Which party shall I espouse? To be sure my mistress's. For in hers,

jurisdiction and power, the common cause of the whole sex, are at stake. But my master I see is coming this way. I'll avoid him, and make my observations.

[Exit.]

Enter Ducat and Polly.

Ducat. Be cheerful, *Polly*, for your good fortune hath thrown you into a family, where, if you rightly consult your own interest, as every body now-a-days does, you may make yourself perfectly easy. Those eyes of your's, *Polly*, are a sufficient fortune for any woman, if she have but conduct, and know how to make the most of 'em.

Polly. As I am your servant, sir, my duty obliges me not to contradict you; and I must hear your flattery, tho' I know myself undeserving. But sure, sir, in handsome women, you must have observed that their hearts often oppose their interest: and beauty certainly has ruin'd more women than it has made happy.

AIR. XIII. The bush-a boon Traquair..

The crow or daw thro' all the year

No fowler seeks to ruin;

But birds of voice or feather rare.

He's all day long pursuing.

Beware, fair maids, to 'scape the net:

That other beauties fell in;

For sure at heart was never yet

So great a wretch as Helen!

If my lady, sir, will let me know my duty, gratitude will make me study to please her.

Ducat. I have a mind to have a little conversation with you, and I would not be interrupted. [bars the door.]

Polly. I wish, sir, you would let me receive my lady's commands.

Ducat. And so, *Polly*, by these downcast looks of your's, you would have me believe you don't know you are handsome, and that you have no faith in your looking-glass. Why every pretty woman studies her face, and a looking-glass to her is what a book is to a

pedant; she is poring upon it all day long. In troth, a man can never know how much love is in him by conversations with his wife. A kiss on those lips, would make me young again. [*Kisses her.*]

AIR XIV. Bury Fair.

Polly. *How can you be so teasing?*

Ducat. *Love will excuse my fault.*

How can you be so pleasing! [*Going to kiss her.*]

Polly. *I vow I'll not be naught.*

Ducat. *All maids I know at first resist.* [*Struggling.*]
A master may command.

Polly. *You're monstrous rude; I'll not be kiss'd:*

Nay, fye, let go my hand.

Ducat. *'Tis foolish pride——*

Polly. *'Tis wile, 'tis base,*

Poor innocence to wrong;

Ducat. *I'll force you.*

Polly. *Guard me from disgrace.*

You find that virtue's strong. [*Pushing him away.*]

'Tis barbarous in you, sir, to take the occasion of my necessities to insult me.

Ducat. Nay, huffy, I'll give you money.

Polly. I despise it. No, sir, tho' I was born and bred in England, I can dare to be poor, which is the only thing now-a-days men are ashamed of.

Ducat. I shall humble these saucy airs of your's, Mrs. Mix. Is this language from a servant! from a slave!

Polly. Am I then betray'd and sold!

Ducat. Yes, huffy, that you are; and as legally my property, as any woman is her husband's, who sells herself in marriage.

Polly. Climates that change constitutions have no effect upon manners. What a profligate is that *Trapes!*

Ducat. Your fortune, your happiness depends upon your compliance. What, proof against a bribe! Sure, huffy, you belie your country, or you must have had a very vulgar education. 'Tis unnatural.

AIR XV. Bobbing Joan.

*Maids like courtiers must be woo'd,
Most by flattery are subdu'd:
Some capricious, coy, or nice,
Out of pride protract the vice,
But they fall,
One and all,
When we bid up to their price.*

Besides, hussy, your consent may make me your slave; there's power to tempt you into the bargain. You must be more than woman if you can stand that too.

Polly. Sure you only mean to try me! but 'tis barbarous to trifle with my distresses.

Ducat. I'll have none of these airs. 'Tis impatient in a servant, to have scruples of any kind. I hire honour, conscience and all, for I will not be serv'd by halves. And so, to be plain with you, you obstinate slut, you shall either contribute to my pleasure or my profit; and if you refuse play in the bed-chamber, you shall go work in the fields among the planters. I hope now I have explain'd myself.

Polly. My freedom may be lost, but you cannot rob me of my virtue and integrity: and whatever is my lot, having that, I shall have the comfort of hope, and find pleasure in reflection.

AIR XVI. A swain long tortur'd with disdain.

*Can I or toil or hunger fear?
For love's a pain that's more severe.
The slave, with virtue in his breast,
Can wake in peace, and sweetly rest.*

But love, when unhappy, the more virtuous it is, the more it suffers. [*Aside.*]

Ducat. What noise is that?

Damaris. [Without] Sir, sir.

Ducat. Step into the closet; I will call you out immediately to present you to my wife. Don't let bashfulness ruin your fortune. The next opportunity I hope you will be better dispos'd. [*Exit Polly.*]

POLLY: AN OPERA.

163

Damaris. Open the door, fir. This moment, this moment.

Enter Damaris.

Ducat. What's the matter? Was any body about to ravish you? Is the house o'fire? Or my wife in a passion?

Damaris. O fir, the whole country is in an uproar! The pirates are all coming down upon us; and if they should raise the militia, you are an officer you know. I hope you have time enough to sling up your commission.

Enter 1st Footman.

1st Footman. The neighbours, fir, are all frightened out of their wits; they leave their houses, and fly to your's for protection. Where's my lady, your wife? Heaven grant, they have not taken her!

Ducat. If they only took what one could spare.

1st Footm. That's true, there were no great harm done.

Ducat. How are the musquets?

1st Footm. Rusty, fir, all rusty and peaceable! For we never clean them but against training-day.

Damaris. Then, fir, your honour is safe, for now you have a just excuse against fighting.

Enter 2d Footman.

2d Footman. The *Indians*, fir, with whom we are in alliance, are all in arms: there will be bloody work to be sure. I hope they will decide the matter before we can get ready.

Enter Mrs. Ducat.

Mrs. Ducat. O dear husband, I'm frighten'd to death! What will become of us all! I thought a punishment for your wicked lewdness would light upon you at last.

Ducat. Presence of mind, my dear, is as necessary in dangers as courage.

Damaris. But you are too rich to have courage. You should fight by deputy. 'Tis only for poor people to be brave and desperate, who cannot afford to live.

Enter Maids, &c. one after another.

1st Maid. The pirates, sir, the pirates! Mercy upon us, what will become of us poor helpless women!

2d Maid. We shall all be ravish'd.

1st Old Woman. All be ravish'd!

2d Old Woman. Ay to be sure, we shall be ravish'd; all be ravish'd!

1st Old Woman. But if fortune will have it so, patience is a virtue, and we must undergo it.

2d Old Woman. Ay, for certain we must all bear it, *Mrs. Damaris.*

3d Footman. A soldier, sir, from the *Indian* camp, desires admittance. He's here, sir.

Enter Indian.

Indian. I come, sir, to the *English* colony, with whom we are in alliance, from the mighty king *Po-betobee*, my lord and master, and address myself to you, as you are of the council, for succours. The pirates are ravaging and plundering the country, and we are now in arms, ready for battle, to oppose them.

Ducat. Does *Macbeath* command the enemy?

Indian. Report says he is dead. Above twelve moons are passed since we heard of him. *Morano*, a Negro villain, is their chief, who in rapine and barbarities is even equal to him.

Ducat. I shall inform the council, and we shall soon be ready to join you. So acquaint the king your master.

[*Exit Indian.*]

AIR XVII. March in *Scipio*.

Brave boys, prepare. [To the men.

Ah! cease, fond wife, to cry. [To her

Servant. For when the danger's near,
We've time enough to fly.

Mrs. Ducat. How can you be disgrac'd!
For wealth secures your fame.

Servant. The rich are always plac'd.
Above the sense of shame.

*Mrs. Ducat. Let honour spur the slave,
To fight for fighting's sake :*

*Ducat. But even the rich are brave
When money is at stake.*

Be satisfy'd, my dear; I shall be discreet. My servants here will take care that I be not over-rash, for their wages depend upon me. But before I go to council—come hither, *Polly*; I intreat you, wife, to take her into your service, [*Enter Polly.*] and use her civilly. Indeed, my dear, your suspicions are very frivolous and unreasonable.

Mrs. Ducat. I hate to have a handsome wench about me. They are always so faucy!

Ducat. Women, by their jealousies, put one in mind of doing that which otherwise we should never think of. Why you are a proof, my dear, that a handsome woman may be honest.

Mrs. Ducat. I find you can say a civil thing to me still.

Ducat. Affairs, you see, call me hence. And so I leave her under your protection. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Ducat. Away, into the other room again. When I want you, I'll call you. [*Exit Polly.*] Well, *Damaris*, to be sure you have observed all that has passed. I will know all. I'm sure she's a huffy.

Damaris. Nay, madam, I can't say so much. But—

Mrs. Ducat. But what?

Damaris. I hate to make mischief.

AIR XVIII. Jig-it-o'Foot.

Better to doubt

All that's doing,

Than to find out

Proofs of ruin.

What servants hear and see

Should they tattle,

Marriage all day would be

Feuds and battle.

A servant's legs and hands should be under your command, but, for the sake of quiet, you should leave their tongues to their own discretion,

Mrs. Ducat. I vow, *Damaris*, I will know it.

Damaris. To be sure, madam, the door was bolted, and I could only listen. There was a sort of a bustle between them, that's certain. What past I know not. But the noise they made, to my thinking, did not sound very honest.

Mrs. Ducat. Noises that did not sound very honest, said you?

Damaris. Nay, madam, I am a maid, and have no experience. If you had heard them, you would have been a better judge of the matter.

Mrs. Ducat. An impudent slut! I'll have her before me. If she be not a thorough profligate, I shall make a discovery by her behaviour. Go call her to me.

[*Exit Damaris, and returns with Polly.*]

Mrs. Ducat. In my own house! Before my face! I'll have you sent to the house of correction, strumpet. By that over-honest look; I guess her to be a horrid jade. A mere hypocrite, that is perfectly white-washed with innocence. My blood rises at the sight of all strumpets, for they are smugglers in love, that ruin us fair traders in matrimony. Look upon me, *Mrs. Brazen*. She has no feeling of shame. She is so used to impudence, that she has not a blush within her. Do you know, madam, that I am *Mr. Ducat's* wife?

Polly. As your servant, madam, I think myself happy.

Mrs. Ducat. You know *Mr. Ducat*, I suppose. She has beauty enough to make any woman alive hate her.

AIR XIX. Trumpet minuet.

Abroad after misses most husbands will roam,

Tho' sure they find woman sufficient at home.

To be nos'd by a strumpet! Hence, buffy, you'd best.

Would he give me my due, I would give her the rest.

I vow I had rather have a thief in my house. For to be sure she is that besides.

Polly. If you were acquainted with my misfortunes, madam, you could not insult me.

Mrs. Ducat. What does the wench mean?

Damaris. There's not one of these common creatures, but like common beggars, hath a moving story at her finger's ends, which they tell over, when they

are maudlin, to their lovers. I had a sweetheart, madam, who was a rake, and I know their ways very well, by hearsay.

Polly. What villains are hypocrites! For they rob those of relief, who are in real distress. I know what it is to be unhappy in marriage.

Mrs. Ducat. Married!

Polly. Unhappily.

Mrs. Ducat. When, where, to whom?

Polly. If woman can have faith in woman, may my words find belief. Protestations are to be suspected, so I shall use none. If truth can prevail, I know you will pity me.

Mrs. Ducat. Her manner and behaviour are so particular, that is to say, so sincere, that I must hear her story. Unhappily married! That is a misfortune not to be remedied.

Polly. A constant woman hath but one chance to be happy; an inconstant woman, tho' she hath no chance to be very happy, can never be very unhappy.

Damaris. Believe me, *Mrs. Polly*, as to pleasures of all sorts, 'tis a much more agreeable way to be inconstant.

AIR XX. *Polwart on the Green.*

*Love now is nought but art,
'Tis who can juggle best;
To all men seem to give your heart,
But keep it in your breast.
What gain and pleasure do we find,
Who change whene'er we list!
The mill that turns with every wind
Must bring the owner grist.*

Polly. My case, madam, may in these times be look'd upon as singular; for I married a man only because I lov'd him. For this I was look'd upon as a fool by all my acquaintance; I was used inhumanly by my father and mother; and, to complete my misfortunes, my husband, by his wild behaviour, incurred the sentence of the law, and was separated from me by banishment. Being informed he was in this country, upon the death of my father and mother, with most of my small fortune, I came here to seek him.

Mrs. Ducat. But how then fell you into the hands of that consummate bawd, *Trapez*?

Polly. In my voyage, madam, I was robb'd of all I had. Upon my landing in a strange country, and in want, I was found out by this inhuman woman, who had been an acquaintance of my father's: She offer'd me at first the civilities of her own house. When she was inform'd of my necessities, she propos'd to me the service of a lady; of which I readily accepted. 'Twas under that pretence that she treacherously sold me to your husband as a mistress. This, madam, is in short the whole truth. I fling myself at your feet for protection. By relieving me, you make yourself easy.

Mrs. Ducat. What is't you propose?

Polly. In conniving at my escape, you save me from your husband's worrying me with threats and violence, and at the same time quiet your own fears and jealousies. If it is ever in my power, madam, with gratitude I will repay you my ransom.

Damaris. Besides, madam, you will effectually revenge yourself upon your husband; for the loss of the money he paid for her will touch him to the quick.

Mrs. Ducat. But have you considered what you request? We are invaded by the pirates: The *Indians* are in arms; the whole country is in commotion, and you will every where be expos'd to danger.

Damaris. Get rid of her at any rate. For such is the vanity of man, that when once he has begun with a woman, out of pride he will insist upon his point.

Polly. In staying with you, madam, I make two people unhappy. And I chuse to bear my own misfortunes, without being the cause of another's.

Mrs. Ducat. If I let her escape before my husband's return, he will imagine she got off by the favour of this bustle and confusion.

Polly. May heaven reward your charity.

Mrs. Ducat. A woman so young and handsome must be expos'd to continual dangers. -I have a suit of clothes by me of my nephew's, who is dead. In a man's habit you will run fewer risques. I'll assist you too for the present with some money; and, as a traveller, you may with greater safety make enquiries after your husband.

Polly. How shall I ever make a return for so much goodness?

Mrs. Ducat. May love reward your constancy. As for that perfidious monster *Trapes*, I will deliver her into the hands of the magistrate. Come, *Damaris*, let us this instant equip her for her adventures.

Damaris. When she is out of the house, without doubt, madam, you will be more easy. And I wish she may be so too.

Polly. May virtue be my protection; for I feel within me hope, cheerfulness, and resolution.

AIR XXI. *St. Martin's Lane.*

*As pilgrims thro' devotion
To some shrine pursue their way,
They tempt the raging ocean,
And thro' deserts stray.
With zeal their hope desiring,
The saint their breast inspiring
With cheerful air,
Devoid of fear,
They every danger bear.
Thus equal zeal possessing,
I seek my only blessing.
O love, my honest vow regard!
My truth protect,
My steps direct,
His flight detect,
A faithful wife reward.*

[Exit.



A C T II.

SCENE, *The View of an Indian Country.*

Polly, in Boy's Clothes.

AIR XXII. *La Villanella.*

WHY did you spare him,
O'er seas to bear him,
Far from his home, and constant bride?
When papa 'peach'd him,
If death had reach'd him,
I then had only sigh'd, wept, and dy'd!

H

If my directions are right, I cannot be far from the village. With the habit, I must put on the courage and resolution of a man; for I am every where surrounded with dangers. By all I can learn of these pirates, my dear *Macheath* is not of the crew. Perhaps I may hear of him among the slaves of the next plantation. How sultry is the day! the cool of this shade will refresh me. I am jaded too with reflection. How restless is love! [*Musical, two or three bars of the dead march.*] My imagination follows him every where, would my feet were as swift; the world then could not hide him from me. [*Two or three bars more.*] Yet even thought is now bewilder'd in pursuing him. [*Two or three bars more.*] I'm tir'd, I'm faint. [*The Symphony.*]

AIR XXIII. Dead March in *Cortolanus*.

Sleep, O sleep,
With thy rod of incantation,
Charm my imagination,
Then, only then, I cease to weep.

By thy power,
The Virgin, by time o'ertaken,
For years forlorn, forsaken,
Enjoys the happy hour.

What's to sleep?
'Tis a visionary blessing;
A dream that's past expressing,
Our utmost wish possessing;
So may I always keep. [Falls asleep.]

Enter Capstern; Hacker, Culverin, Laguerre, and Cutlace. Polly asleep in a distant part of the stage.

Hacker. We shall find but a cool reception from *Morano*, if we return without either booty or intelligence.

Culverin. A man of invention hath always intelligence ready. I hope we are not exempted from the privilege of travellers.

Capstern. If we had got booty, you know we had resolv'd to agree in a lye. And, gentlemen, we will not have our diligence and duty call'd in question for that which every common servant has at his fingers end for his justification.

Laguerre. Alack, gentlemen, we are not such bunglers in love or politics, but we must know that either to get favour or keep it, no man ever speaks what he thinks, but what is convenient.

A I R XXIV. Three sheep-skins.

Cutlace. *Of all the sins that are money-supplying;
Consider the world, 'tis past all denying,
With all sorts,
In towns or courts,
The richest sin is lying.*

Culverin. Fatigue, gentlemen, should have refreshment. No man is requir'd to do more than his duty. Let us repose ourselves a-while. A sup or two of our cag would quicken invention. [*They sit and drink.*

All. Agreed.

Hacker. I had always a genius for ambition: Birth and education cannot keep it under. Our profession is great, brothers. What can be more heroic than to have declared war with the whole world?

Culverin. 'Tis a pleasure to me to recollect times past, and to observe by what steps a genius will push his fortune.

Hacker. Now as to me, brothers, mark you me. After I had rubb'd through my youth with variety of adventures, I was preferr'd to be footman to an eminent gamester, where, after having improv'd myself by his manners and conversation, I left him, betook myself to his politer profession, and cheated like a gentleman. For some time I kept a *Pharaon*-bank with success, but unluckily in a drunken bout was stript by a more expert brother of the trade. I was now, as 'tis common with us upon these occasions, forc'd to have recourse to the highway for a recruit to set me up; but making the experiment once too often, I was try'd, and received sentence; but got off for transportation. Which hath made me the man I am.

Laguerre. From a footman I grew to be a pimp to a man of quality. Considering I was for some time in that employment, I look upon myself as particularly unlucky, that I then missed making my fortune. But, to give him his due, only his death could have pre-

vented it. Upon this, I betook myself to another service, where my wages not being sufficient for my pleasures, I robb'd my master, and retir'd to visit foreign parts.

Capstern. Now, you must know, I was a drawer to one of the fashionable taverns, and of consequence was daily in the politest conversations. Tho' I say it, nobody was better bred. I often cheated my master, and, as a dutiful servant, now and then cheated for him. I had always my gallantries with the ladies that the lords and gentlemen brought to our house. I was ambitious too of a gentleman's profession, and turn'd gamester. Tho' I had great skill and no scruples, my play would not support my extravagancies: So that now and then I was forced to rob with pistols too. So I also owe my rank in the world to transportation.

Culverin. Our chief *Morano*, brothers, had never been the man he is, had he not been train'd up in *England*. He has told me, that from his infancy he was the favourite page of a lady. He had a genius too above service, and, like us, ran into higher life. And, indeed, in manners and conversation, tho' he is black, no body has more the air of a great man.

Hacker. He is too much attach'd to his pleasures. That mistress of his is a clog to his ambition. She's an arrant *Cleopatra*.

Laguerre. If it were not for her, the *Indies* would be our own.

AIR XXV. Rigadoon.

*By women won,
We're all undone,
Each wench bath a Syren's charms.
The lover's deeds
Are good or ill,
As whim succeeds
In woman's will:
Resolution is lull'd in her arms.*

Hacker. A man in love is no more to be depended on than a man in liquor, for he is out of himself.

AIR XXVI. *Ton humeur est Catharine.*

*Woman's like the flatt'ring ocean,
 Who her pathless ways can find?
 Every blast directs her motion;
 Now she's angry, now she's kind.
 What a fool's the vent'rous lover,
 Whirl'd and toss'd by every wind!
 Can the bark the port recover
 When the silly pilot's blind?*

Hacker. A good horse is never turn'd loose among mares, till all his good deeds are over. And really your heroes should be serv'd the same way; for after they take to women, they have no good deeds to come. That inveigling gypsy, brothers, must be hawl'd from him by force. And then—the kingdom of Mexico shall be mine. My lot shall be the kingdom of Mexico.

Capstern. Who talks of Mexico? [*all rise*] I'll never give it up. If you outlive me, brother, and I die without heirs, I'll leave it to you for a legacy. I hope now you are satisfy'd. I have set my heart upon it, and nobody shall dispute it with me.

Laguerre. The island of Cuba, methinks, brother, might satisfy any reasonable man.

Culverin. That I had allotted for you. Mexico shall not be parted with without my content: captain *Morano* to be sure will choose *Peru*; that's the country of gold, and all your great men love gold. Mexico hath only silver, nothing but silver. Governor of *Cartagena*, brother, is a pretty snug employment. That I shall not dispute with you.

Capstern. Death, sir,—I shall not part with Mexico so easily.

Hacker. Nor I.

Culverin. Nor I.

Laguerre. Nor I.

Culverin. Nor I.

Hacker. Draw then, and let the survivor take it.

[*They fight.*]

Polly. Bless me, what noise was that! Clashing of swords and fighting! Which way shall I fly, how shall I escape?

Capstern. Hold, hold, gentlemen, let us decide our pretensions some other time. I see booty. A prisoner. Let us seize him.

Culverin. From him we will extort both ransom and intelligence.

Polly. Spare my life, gentlemen. If you are the men I take you for, I sought you to share your fortunes.

Hacker. Why, who do you take us for, friend?

Polly. For those brave spirits, those *Alexanders*, that shall soon by conquest be in possession of the *Indies*.

Laguerre. A mettled young fellow.

Capstern. He speaks with respect too, and gives us our titles.

Culverin. Have you heard of captain *Marano*?

Polly. I came hither in mere ambition to serve under him.

A I R XXVII. Ye nymphs and sylvan gods.

*I hate those coward tribes,
Who by mean sneaking bribes,
By tricks and disguise,
By flattery and lies,
To power and grandeur rise.
Like heroes of old
You are greatly bold,
The sword your cause supports.
Untaught to spawn,
You ne'er were drawn
Your truth to pawn
Among the spawn
Who practise the frauds of courts.*

I would willingly chuse the more honourable way of making a fortune.

Hacker. The youth speaks well. Can you inform us, my lad, of the disposition of the enemy? Have the *Indians* joined the factory? We should advance towards them immediately. Who knows but they may side with us? Mayhap they may like our tyranny better.

Polly. I am a stranger, gentlemen, and entirely ignorant of the affairs of this country: But in the most desperate undertaking, I am ready to risque your fortunes.

Hecker. Who, and what are you, friend!

Polly. A young fellow, who has genteely run out his fortune with a spirit, and would now with more spirit retrieve it.

Culverin. The lad may be of service. Let us bring him before *Morano*, and leave him to his disposal.

Polly. Gentlemen, I thank you.

AIR XXVIII. Minuet.

Culverin. *Cheer up, my lads, let us push on the fray,
For battles, like women, are lost by delay.
Let us seize victory while in our power;
Alike war and love have their critical hour.
Our hearts bold and steady
Should always be ready,
So, think war a widow, a kingdom the dower.*
[Exeunt.]

SCENE, *Another Country Prospect.*

Morano, Jenny.

Morano. Sure, hussy, you have more ambition and more vanity than to be serious in persuading me to quit my conquests. Where is the woman who is not fond of title? And one bold step more, may make you a queen, you gypsy. Think of that.

AIR XXIX. Mirliton.

*When I'm great, and flush of treasure,
Check'd by neither fear or shame,
You shall tread a round of pleasure,
Morning, noon, and night the same.
With a Mirliton, &c.
Like a city wife or beauty
You shall flutter life away;
And shall know no other duty,
But to dress, eat, drink, and play.
With a Mirliton, &c.*

When you are a queen, *Jenny*, you shall keep your coach and six, and shall game as deep as you please. So, there's the two chief ends of woman's ambition satisfy'd.

AIR XXX. Sawny was tall, and of noble race.

*Shall I not be bold when honour calls?
You've a heart that would upbraid me then.*

Jenny. *But, ah, I fear, if my hero falls,
Thy Jenny shall ne'er know pleasure again.*

Morano. *To deck their wives fond tradesmen cheat;
I conquer but to make thee great.*

Jenny. *But if my hero falls—ah then
Thy Jenny shall ne'er know pleasure again!*

Morano. Insinuating creature! but you must own, Jenny, you have had convincing proofs of my fondness; and if you were reasonable in your love, you should have some regard to my honour, as well as my person.

Jenny. Have I ever betrayed you, since you took me to yourself? That's what few women can say, who ever were trusted.

Morano. In love, Jenny, you cannot out-do me. Was it not entirely for you that I disguised myself as a black, to screen myself from women who laid claim to me where-ever I went? Is not the rumour of my death, which I purposely spread, credited thro' the whole country? *Macheath* is dead to all the world but you. Not one of the crew have the least suspicion of me.

Jenny. But, dear captain, you would not sure persuade me that I have all of you. For tho' women cannot claim you, you now and then lay claim to other women. But my jealousy was never teasing or vexatious. You will pardon me, my dear.

Morano. Now you are silly, Jenny. Pr'ythee—poh! Nature, girl, is not to be corrected at once. What do you propose? What would you have me do? Speak out, let me know your mind.

Jenny. Know when you are well.

Morano. Explain yourself; speak your sentiments freely.

Jenny. You have a competence in your power. Rob the crew, and steal off to *England*. Believe me, captain, you will be rich enough to be respected by your neighbours.

Morano. Your opinion of me startles me. For I

never in my life was treacherous but to women; and you know, men of the nicest punctilio make nothing of that.

Jenny. Look round among all the snug fortunes that are made, and you will find most of them were secured by judicious retreat. Why will you bar yourself from the customs of the times?

AIR XXXI. Northern Nancy.

*How many men have found the skill
Of power and wealth acquiring?
But sure there's a time to stint the will,
And the judgment is in retiring.
For to be displac'd,
For to be disgrac'd,
Is the end of too high aspiring.*

Enter Sailor.

Sailor. Sir, lieutenant *Vanderbluff* wants to speak with you. And he hopes your honour will give him the hearing. [Exit.

Morano. Leave me, *Jenny*, for a few minutes. Perhaps he would speak with me in private.

Jenny. Think of my advice before it is too late. By this kiss I beg it of you. [Exit.

Enter Vanderbluff.

Vanderbluff. For shame, captain; what, hampered in the arms of a woman, when your honour and glory are all at stake! while a man is grappling with these gil-firts, pardon the expression, captain, he runs his reason a-ground; and there must be a woundy deal of labour to set it a-float again.

AIR XXXII. Amante fuggite cadente belta.

*Fine women are devils, complete in their way
They always are roving and cruising for prey,
When flounce on their hook, their views they obtain,
Like those too their pleasure is giving us pain.*

Excuse my plain speaking, captain; a boatswain must swear in a storm, and a man must speak plain, when he sees foul weather a-head of us.

Morano. D'you think me like the wheat-ear, only fit for sunshine, who cannot bear the least cloud over him? No, *Vanderbluff*, I have a heart that can face a tempest of dangers. Your blust'ring will but make me obstinate. You seem frighten'd, lieutenant.

Vanderbluff. From any body but you, that speech should have had another-guess answer than words. Death, captain, are not the *Indies* in dispute? an hour's delay may make their hands too many for us. Give the word, captain, this hand shall take the *Indian* king pris'ner, and keel-hawl him afterwards, 'till I make him discover his gold. I have known you eager to venture your life for a less prize.

Morano. *Are-Hacker, Culverin, Capstern, Laguerre,* and the rest, whom we sent out for intelligence, return'd, that you are under this immediate alarm?

Vanderbluff. No, sir; but from the top of yon' hill, I myself saw the enemy putting themselves in order of battle.

Morano. But we have nothing at all to apprehend; for we have still a safe retreat to our ships.

Vanderbluff. To our woman, you mean. Furies! you talk like one. If our captain is bewitch'd, shall we be be-devil'd; and lose the footing we have got. [*Draws.*]

Morano. Take care, lieutenant. This language may provoke me. I fear nothing, and that you know. Put up your cutlace, lieutenant, for I shall not ruin our cause by a private quarrel.

Vanderbluff. Noble captain, I ask pardon.

Morano. A brave man should be cool till action, lieutenant; when danger presses us, I am always ready. Be satisfy'd, I will take my leave of my wife, and then take the command.

Vanderbluff. That's what you can never do till you have her leave. She is but just gone from you, sir. See her not; hear her not; the breath of a woman has ever prov'd a contrary wind to great actions.

Morano. I tell you I will see her. I have got rid of many a woman in my time, and you may trust me.—

Vanderbluff. With any woman but her. The husband that is govern'd is the only man that never finds out that he is so.

Morano. This then, lieutenant, shall try my resolution. In the mean time, send out parties and scouts to observe the motions of the *Indians*.

AIR XXXIII. Since all the world's turn'd upside down,

*Tho' different passions rage by turns,
 Witbin my breast fermenting;
 Now blazes love, now honour burns,
 I'm here, I'm there consenting.
 I'll each obey, so keep my oath,
 That oath by which I won her:
 With truth and stedfastness in both,
 I'll act like a man of honour.*

Doubt me not, lieutenant. But I'll now go with you, to give the necessary commands, and after that return to take my leave before the battle.

Enter Jenny, Capstern, Culverin, Hacker, Laguerre, Polly.

Jenny. Hacker, sir, and the rest of the party are return'd with a prisoner. Perhaps from him you may learn some intelligence that may be useful. See, here they are.—A clever sprightly young fellow! I like him. [*Aside.*

Vanderbluff. What cheer, my lads? has fortune sent you a good prize?

Jenny. He seems some rich planter's son.

Vanderbluff. Is the common practice of commerce you should never slip an opportunity, and for his ransom, no doubt, there will be room for comfortable extortion.

Morano. Hath he inform'd you of any thing that may be of service? where pick'd you him up? whence is he?

Hacker. We found him upon the road. He is a stranger it seems in these parts. And as our heroes generally set out, extravagance, gaming, and debauchery have qualify'd him for a brave man.

Morano. What are you, friend?

Polly. A young fellow, who hath been robb'd by the world; and I came on, purpose to join you, to rob the world by way of retaliation. An open war with

the whole world is brave and honourable. I hate the clandestine pilfering war that is practised among friends and neighbours in civil societies. I would serve, sir.

AIR XXXIV. Hunt the squirrel.

*The world is always jarring;
This is pursuing
T'other man's ruin,
Friends with friends are warring,
In a false cowardly way.
Spurr'd on by emulations,
Tongues are engaging,
Calumny raging,
Murthers reputations,
Envy keeps up the fray.
Thus, with burning hate,
Each, returning hate,
Wounds and robs his friends.
In civil life,
Even man and wife
Squabble for selfish ends.*

Jenny. He really is a mighty pretty man. [*Aside.*
Vanderbluff. The lad promises well, and has just notions of the world.

Morano. Whatever other great men do, I love to encourage merit. The youth pleases me; and if he answers in action—d'you hear me, my lad?—your fortune is made. Now, lieutenant *Vanderbluff*, I am for you.

Vanderbluff. Discipline must not be neglected.

Morano. When every thing is settled, my dear *Jenny*, I will return to take my leave. After that, young gentleman, I shall try your mettle. In the mean time, *Jenny*, I leave you to sift him with farther questions. He has liv'd in the world, you find, and may have learnt to be treacherous. [*Exeunt with the rest of the Pirates.*

Jenny. How many women have you ever ruin'd, young gentleman!

Polly. I have been ruined by women, madam. But I think indeed a man's fortune cannot be more honourably disposed of; for those have always a kind of claim

to their protection, who have been ruin'd in their service.

Jenny. Were you ever in love?

Polly. With the sex.

Jenny. Had you never a woman in love with you?

Polly. All the women that ever I knew were mercenary.

Jenny. But sure you cannot think all women so.

Polly. Why not as well as all men? The manners of courts are catching.

Jenny. If you have found only such usage, a generous woman can the more oblige you. Why so bashful, young spark? You don't look as if you would revenge yourself on the sex.

Polly. I lost my impudence with my fortune. Poverty keeps down assurance.

Jenny. I am a plain-spoken woman, as you may find, and I own I like you. And, let me tell you, to be my favourite may be your best step to preferment.

AIR XXXV. Young *Damon* once the loveliest swain,

*In love and life the present use,
One hour we grant, the next refuse;
Who then would risque a nay?
Were lovers wise they would be kind,
And in our eyes the moment find;
For only then they may.*

Like other women I shall run to extremes. If you won't make me love you, I shall hate you. There never was a man of true courage, who was a coward in love. Sure you are not afraid of me, stripling?

[Taking Polly by the hand.]

Polly. I know you only railly me. Respect, madam, keeps me in awe.

Jenny. By your expression and behaviour, one would think I were your wife. If so, I may make use of her freedoms, and do what I please without shame or restraint. *[Kisses her.]* Such raillery as this, my dear, requires replication.

Polly. You'll pardon me then, madam. *[Kisses her.]*

Jenny. What, my cheek! let me die, if, by your kiss, I should not take you for my brother or my father.

AIR XXXIX. Health to *Betty*.

*If husbands sit unsteady,
Most wives for freaks are ready.
Neglect the rein,
The steed again
Grows skittish, wild, and heady.*

Your behaviour forces me to say, what my love for you will never let me put in practice. You are too safe, too secure, to think of pleasing me.

Morano. Tho' I like impudence, yet 'tis not so agreeable when put in practice upon my own wife: and, jesting apart, young fellow, if ever I catch you thinking this way again, a cat-o'-nine-tails shall cool your courage.

Enter Vanderbluff, Capstern, Laguerre, &c. with Cawwawkee prisoner.

Vanderbluff. The party, captain, is return'd with success. After a short skirmish, the *Indian* prince *Cawwawkee* here was made prisoner, and we want your orders for his disposal.

Morano. Are all our troops ready and under arms?

Vanderbluff. They wait but for your command. Our numbers are strong. All the ships crews are drawn out, and the slaves that have deserted to us from the plantations are all brave determin'd fellows, who must behave themselves well.

Morano. Look'e, lieutenant, the trusting up this prince, in my opinion, would strike a terror among the enemy. Besides, dead men can do no mischief. Let a gibbet be set up, and swing him off between the armies before the onset.

Vanderbluff. By your leave, captain, my advice blows directly contrary. Whatever may be done hereafter, I am for putting him first of all upon examination. The *Indians* to be sure have hid their treasures, and we shall want a guide to shew us to the best plunder.

Morano. The counsel is good. I will extort intelligence from him. Bring me word when the enemy are in motion, and that instant I'll put myself at your head. [*Exit Sailor.*] Do you know me, prince?

Caw. As a man of injustice I know you, who covets and invades the properties of another.

Morano. Do you know my power?

Caw. I fear it not.

Morano. Do you know your danger?

Caw. I am prepar'd to meet it.

AIR XL. Cappe de Bonne Esperance.

*The body of the brave may be taken,
If chance bring on our adverse hour;
But the noble soul is unshaken,
For that still is in our power;
'Tis a rock whose firm foundation
Mocks the waves of perturbation;
'Tis a never-dying ray,
Brighter in our evil day.*

Morano. Mere downright Barbarians, you see, lieutenant. They have our notional honour still in practice among them.

Vanderbluff. We must beat civilizing into 'em, to make 'em capable of common society, and common conversation.

Morano. Stubborn prince, mark me well. Know you, I say, that your life is in my power?

Caw. I know too, that my virtue is in my own.

Morano. Not a mule, or an old out-of-fashion'd philosopher could be more obstinate. Can you feel pain?

Caw. I can bear it.

Morano. I shall try you.

Caw. I speak truth, I never affirm but what I know.

Morano. In what condition are your troops? What numbers have you? How are they disposed? Act reasonably and openly, and you shall find protection.

Caw. What, betray my friends! I am no coward, *European.*

Morano. Torture shall make you squeak.

Caw. I have resolution; and pain shall neither make me lie or betray. I tell thee once more, *European*, I am no coward.

Vanderbluff. What, neither cheat nor be cheated! There is no having either commerce or correspondence with these creatures.

Jenny. We have reason to be thankful for our good education. How ignorant is mankind without it!

Capstern. I wonder to hear the brute speak.

Laguerre. They would make a shew of him in *England*.

Jenny. Poh, they would only take him for a fool.

Capstern. But how can you expect any thing else from a creature, who hath never seen a civiliz'd country? Which way should he know mankind?

Jenny. Since they are made like us, to be sure, were they in *England* they might be taught.

Laguerre. Why we see country gentlemen grow into courtiers, and country gentlewomen, with a little polishing of the town, in a few months become fine ladies.

Jenny. Without doubt, education and example can do much.

Polly. How happy are these savages! Who would not wish to be in such ignorance. [*Aside.*]

Morano. Have done, I beg you, with your musty reflections: You but interrupt the examination. You have treasures, you have gold and silver among you, I suppose.

Caw. Better it had been for us if that shining earth had never been brought to light.

Morano. That you have treasures then you own, it seems. I am glad to hear you confess something.

Caw. But, out of benevolence, we ought to hide it from you. For, as we have heard, 'tis so rank a poison to you *Europeans*, that the very touch of it makes you mad.

AIR XLI. When bright Aurelia tripp'd the plain.

For gold you sacrifice your fame,

Your honour, life, and friend:

You war, you fawn, you lie, you game,

And plunder without fear or shame;

Can madness this transcend?

Morano. Bold savage, we are not to be insulted with your ignorance. If you would save your lives, you

must, like the beaver, leave behind you what we hunt you for, or we shall not quit the chase. Discover your treasures, your hoards, for I will have the ransacking of 'em.

Jenny. By his seeming to set some value upon gold, one would think that he had some glimmering of sense.

AIR XLII. *Peggy's Mill.*

*When gold is in hand,
It gives us command;
It makes us lov'd and respected.
'Tis now, as of yore,
Wit and sense, when poor,
Are scorn'd, o'erlook'd, and neglected.
Tho' peevish and old,
If women have gold,
They have youth, good-humour, and beauty:
Among all mankind
Without it we find
Nor love, nor favour, nor duty.*

Morano. I will have no more of these interruptions. Since women will be always talking, one would think they had a chance now and then to talk in season. Once more I ask you, obstinate, audacious savage, if I grant you your life, will you be useful to us? For you shall find mercy upon no other terms. I will have immediate compliance, or you shall undergo the torture.

Caw. With dishonour life is nothing worth.

Morano. Furies! I'll trifle no longer.

RECITATIVE, *Sia suggetta la plebe, in Coriolan.*

Hence, let him feel his sentence.

Pain brings repentance.

Laguerra. You would not have us put him to death, captain?

Morano. Torture him leisurely, but severely. I shall stagger your resolution, *Indian.*

RECITATIVE.

*Hence, let him feel his sentence.
Pain brings repentance.*

But hold, I'll see him tortur'd. I will have the pleasure of extorting answers from him myself. So keep him safe till you have my directions.

Laguerre. It shall be done.

Morano. As for you, young gentleman, I think it not proper to trust you till I know you farther. Let him be your prisoner too till I give order how to dispose of him. *[Exeunt Caw. and Polly guarded.]*

Vanderbluff. Come, noble captain, take one hearty smack upon her lips, and then steer off; for one kiss requires another, and you will never have done with her. If once a man and woman come to grappling, there's no hawling of 'em asunder. Our friends expect us.

Jenny. Nay, lieutenant *Vanderbluff*, he shall not go yet.

Vanderbluff. I'm out of all patience. There is a time for all things, madam. But a woman thinks all times must be subservient to her whim and humour. We should be now upon the spot.

Jenny. Is the captain under your command, lieutenant?

Vanderbluff. I know women better than so. I shall never dispute the command with any gentleman's wife. Come captain, a woman will never take the last kiss; she will always want another. Break from her clutches.

Morano. I must go—But I cannot.

AIR XLIII. Excuse me.

*Honour calls me from thy arms,
With glory my bosom is beating.*

[To him.]

*Victory summons to arms: then to arms
Let us haste, for we're sure of defeating.*

One look more—and then—

[To her.]

Oh, I am lost again!

What a power has beauty!

But honour calls, and I must away.

[To him.

But love forbids, and I must obey.

[To her.

You grow too bold; [Vanderbluff pulling him away.

Hence, loose your hold,

[To him.

For love claims all my duty.

[To her.

They will bring us word when the enemy is in motion.
I know my own time, lieutenant.

Vanderbluff. Lose the *Indies* then, with all my heart.
Lose the money, and you lose the woman, that I can
tell you, captain. Furies, what would the woman
be at!

Jenny. Not so hasty and choleric, I beg you, lieutenant.
Give me the hearing, and perhaps, whatever
you may think of us, you may once in your life hear
a woman speak reason.

Vanderbluff. Dispatch then. And if a few words can
satisfy you, be brief.

Jenny. Men only slight womens advice thro' an over-
conceit of their own opinions. I am against hazarding
a battle. Why should we put what we have already
got to the risque? We have money enough on board
our ships to secure our persons, and can reserve a com-
fortable subsistence besides. Let us leave the *Indies* to
our comrades.

Vanderbluff. Sure you are the first of the sex that ever
flinted herself in love or money. If it were consistent
with our honour, her counsel were worth listening to.

Jenny. Consistent with our honour! For shame, lieu-
tenant; you talk downright *Indian*. One would take
you for the savage's brother, or cousin-german at least.
You may talk of honour, as other great men do: But
when interest comes in your way, you should do as
other great men do.

AIR XLIV. Ruben.

Honour plays a bubble's part,

Ever bilk'd and cheated;

Never in ambition's heart,

Int'rest there is seated.

Caw. Have you then hypocrisy still among you? For all that I have experienc'd of your manners is open violence, and barefac'd injustice. Who that had ever felt the satisfaction of virtue would ever part with it?

AIR XLVII. T'amo tanto.

*Virtue's treasure,
Is a pleasure,
Cheerful even amid distress;
Nor pain nor crosses,
Nor grief nor losses,
Nor death itself can make it less.
Here relying,
Suff'ring, dying,
Honest souls find all redress.*

Polly. My heart feels your sentiments, and my tongue longs to join in 'em.

Caw. *Virtue's treasure
Is a pleasure,*

Polly. *Cheerful even amid distress;*

Caw. *Nor pain nor crosses,*

Polly. *Nor grief nor losses,*

Caw. *Nor death itself can make it less!*

Polly. *Here relying,*

Caw. *Suff'ring, dying,*

Polly. *Honest souls find all redress.*

Caw. Having this, I want no other consolation. I am prepared for all misfortune.

Polly. Had you means of escape, you could not refuse it. To preserve your life is your duty.

Caw. By dishonest means, I scorn it.

Polly. But stratagem is allow'd in war; and 'tis lawful to use all the weapons employ'd against you. You may save your friends from affliction, and be the instrument of rescuing your country.

Caw. Those are powerful inducements. I seek not voluntarily to resign my life. While it lasts, I would do my duty.

Polly. I'll talk with our guard. What induces them to rapine and murder, will induce them to betray.

You may offer them what they want; and from no hands, upon no terms, corruption can resist the temptation.

Caw. I have no skill. Those who are corrupt themselves know how to corrupt others. You may do as you please. But whatever you promise for me, contrary to the *European* custom, I will perform. For, though a knave may break his word with a knave, an honest tongue knows no such distinctions.

Polly. Gentlemen, I desire some conference with you, that may be for your advantage.

Enter Laguerre, and Capstern.

Polly. Know you that you have the *Indian* prince in your custody?

Laguerre. Full well.

Polly. Know you the treasures that are in his power?

Laguerre. I know too that they shall soon be our's.

Polly. In having him in your possession they are your's.

Laguerre. As how, friend?

Polly. He might well reward you.

Laguerre. For what?

Polly. For his liberty.

Caw. Yes, *European*, I can and will reward you.

Capstern. He's a great man, and I trust no such promises.

Caw. I have said it, *European*: And an *Indian's* heart is always answerable for his words.

Polly. Think of the chance of war, gentlemen. Conquest is not so sure when you fight against those who fight for their liberties.

Laguerre. What think you of the proposal?

Capstern. The prince can give us places; he can make us all great men. Such a prospect, I can tell you, *Laguerre*, would tempt our betters.

Laguerre. Besides, if we are beaten, we have no retreat to our ships.

Capstern. If we gain our ends, what matter how we come by it?

Laguerre. Every man for himself, say I. There is no being even with mankind, without that universal maxim. Consider, brother, we run no risk.

Capstern. Nay, I have no objections.

Laguerre. If we conquer'd, and the booty were to be divided among the crews, what would it amount to? Perhaps this way we might get more than would come to our shares.

Capstern. Then too, I always lik'd a place at court. I have a genius to get, keep in, and make the most of an employment.

Laguerre. You will confider, prince, our own politicians would have rewarded such meritorious services: We'll go off with you.

Capstern. We want only to be known to be employ'd.

Laguerre. Let us unbind him then.

Polly. 'Tis thus one able politician outwits another; and we admire their wisdom. You may rely upon the prince's word as much as if he was a poor man.

Capstern. Our fortunes then are made.

AIR XLVIII. Down in a meadow.

Polly. *The sportsmen keep hawks, and their quarry they gain;
Thus the woodcock, the partridge, the pheasant is slain.*

*What care and expence for their bounds are employ'd!
Thus the fox, and the hare, and the stag are destroy'd.
The spaniel they cherish, whose flattering way
Can as well as their masters cringe, fawn and betray.*

*Thus stanch politicians, look all the world round,
Love the men who can serve as hawk, spaniel, or hound.*

A C T III.

SCENE, *The Indian Camp.*

Pohetohee, and Attendants.

INDIAN.

SIR, a party from the *British* factory have joined us. Their chief attends for your majesty's orders for their disposition.

Pob. Let them be posted next my command; for I would be witness of their bravery. But first let their officer know I would see him. *[Exit Indian.]*

Enter Ducat.

Ducat. I would do all in my power to serve your majesty. I have brought up my men, and now, sir,—I would fain give up. I speak purely upon your majesty's account. For as to courage and all that—I have been a colonel of the militia these ten years.

Pob. Sure, you have not fear. Are you a man?

Ducat. A married man, sir, who carries his wife's heart about him, and that indeed is a little timorous. Upon promise to her, I am engaged to quit in case of a battle; and her heart hath ever govern'd me more than my own. Besides, sir, fighting is not our business; we pay others for fighting; and yet 'tis well known we had rather part with our lives than our money.

Pob. And have you no spirit then to defend it? Your families, your liberties, your properties are at stake. If these cannot move you, you must be born without a heart.

Ducat. Alas, sir, we cannot be answerable for human infirmities.

AIR XLIX. There was an old man, and he liv'd.

What man can on virtue or courage repose,

Or guess if the touch 'twill abide?

Like gold, if intrinsic sure no body knows,

Till weigh'd in the ballance and try'd.

Pob. How different are your notions from ours! We think virtue, honour, and courage as essential to man as his limbs, or senses; and in every man we suppose the qualities of a man, till we have found the contrary; but then we regard him only as a brute in disguise. How custom can degrade nature!

Ducat. Why should I have any more scruples about myself, than about my money? If I can make my courage pass current, what matter is it to me whether it be true or false? 'Tis time enough to own a man's failings when they are found out. If your majesty then will not dispense with my duty to my wife, with

permission, I'll to my post. 'Tis wonderful to me that kings ever go to war, who have so much to lose, and nothing essential to get. [Exit.

Pob. My son a prisoner! Tortur'd perhaps and inhumanly butcher'd! Human nature cannot bear up against such afflictions. The war must suffer by his absence. More than is required from me. Grief raises my resolution, and calls me to relieve him, or to a just revenge. What mean those shouts? [Enter Indian.

Indian. The prince, sir, is return'd. The troops are animated by his presence. With some of the pirates in his retinue, he waits your majesty's commands.

Enter Cawwawkee, Polly, Laguerre, Capstern, &c.

Pob. Victory then is our's. Let me embrace him. Welcome, my son. Without thee my heart could not have felt a triumph.

Caw. Let this youth then receive your thanks. To him are owing my life and liberty. And the love of virtue alone gain'd me his friendship.

Pob. This hath convinc'd me that an *European* can be generous and honest.

Caw. These others, indeed, have the passion of their country. I owe their services to gold, and my promise is engag'd to reward them. How it galls honour to have obligations to a dishonourable man!

Laguerre. I hope your majesty will not forget our services.

Pob. I am bound for my son's engagements.

Caw. For this youth, I will be answerable. Like a gem found in rubbish, he appears the brighter among these his countrymen.

A I R L. *Iris la plus charmante.*

Love with beauty is flying,

At once 'tis blooming and dying;

But all seasons defying,

Friendship lasts on the year.

Love is by long enjoying,

Cloying;

Friendship, enjoy'd the longer,

Stronger.

O may the flame divine

Burn in your breast like mine!

Polly. Most noble prince, my behaviour shall justify the good opinion you have of me; and my friendship is beyond professions.

Pob. Let these men remain under guard, till after the battle. All promises shall then be made good to you. *[Exit Pirates, guarded.]*

Caw. May this young man be my companion in the war? As a boon I request it of you. He knows our cause is just, and that is sufficient to engage him in it.

Pob. I leave you to appoint him his command. Dispose of him as you judge convenient.

Polly. To fall into their hands is certain torture and death. As far as my youth and strength will permit me, you may rely upon my duty.

Enter Indian.

Indian. Sir, the enemy are advancing towards us.

Pob. Victory then is at hand. Justice protects us, and courage shall support us. Let us then to our posts. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE, *The field of battle.*

Culverin, Hacker, and Pirates.

AIR LI. There was a jovial beggar.

1 Pir. *When horns, with cheerful sound,
Proclaim the active day;
Impatience warms the bound,
He burns to chase the prey.*

Chorus. *Thus to battle we will go, &c.*

2 Pir. *How charms the trumpet's breath!
The brave, with hope possess'd,
Forgetting wounds and death,
Feel conquest in their breast.*

Chorus. *Thus to battle, &c.*

Culverin. But yet I don't see, brother *Hacker*, why we should be commanded by a Neger. 'Tis all along of him that we are led into these difficulties. I hate this land fighting. I love to have sea-room.

Hacker. We are of the council, brother. If ever we get on board again, my vote shall be for calling of

him to account for these pranks. Why should we be such fools to be ambitious of satisfying another's ambition?

Culverin. Let us mutiny. I love mutiny as well as my wife.

1 *Pir.* Let us mutiny.

2 *Pir.* Ay, let us mutiny.

Hacker. Our captain takes too much upon him. I am for no engrosser of power. By our articles he hath no command but in a fight or in a storm. Look'ee, brothers, I am for mutiny as much as any of you, when occasion offers.

Culverin. Right, brother, all in good season. The pafs to our ships is cut off by the troops of the plantation. We must fight the *Indians* first, and we have a mutiny good afterwards.

Hacker. Is *Morano* still with his doxy?

Culverin. He's yonder on the right, putting his troops in order for the onset.

Hacker. I wish this fight of our's were well over. For, to be sure, let soldiers say what they will, they feel more pleasure after a battle than in it.

Culverin. Does not the drum-head here, quartermaster, tempt you to fling a merry main or two?

[*Takes dice out of his pocket.*]

Hacker. If I lose my money, I shall reimburse myself from the *Indians*. I have set.

Culverin. Have at you. A nick. [*Flings.*]

Hacker. Throw the dice fairly out. Are you at me again.

Culverin. I'm at it. Seven or eleven. [*Flings.*] Eleven.

Hacker. Furies! A manifest cog! I won't be bubbled, fir. This would not pass upon a drunken country gentleman. Death, fir, I won't be cheated.

Culverin. The money is mine. D'you take me for a sharper, fir?

Hacker. Yes, fir.

Culverin. I'll have satisfaction.

Hacker. With all my heart. [*Fighting.*]

Enter Morano, Vanderbluff, &c.

Morano. For shame, gentlemen! [*Parting them.*] Is this a time for private quarrel? What do I see! Dic:

upon the drum-head! If you have not left off those cowardly tools, you are unworthy your profession. The articles you have sworn to, prohibit gaming for money. Friendship and society cannot subsist where it is practised. As this is the day of battle, I remit your penalties. But let me hear no more of it.

Culverin. To be call'd sharper, captain! is a reproach that no man of honour can put up.

Hacker. But to be one, is what no man of honour can practise.

Morano. If you will not obey orders, quarter-master, this pistol shall put an end to the dispute. [*Claps it to his head.*] The common cause now requires your agreement. If gaming is so rife, I don't wonder that treachery still subsists among you.

Hacker. Who is treacherous?

Morano. *Capstern* and *Laguerre* have let the prince and the stripling, you took prisoner, escape, and are gone off with them to the *Indians*. Upon your duty, gentlemen, this day depends our all.

Culverin. Rather than have ill blood among us I return the money. I value your friendship more. Let all animosities be forgot.

Morano. We should be *Indians* among ourselves, and shew our breeding and parts to every body else. If we cannot be true to one another, and false to all the world beside, there is an end of every great enterprize.

Hacker. We have nothing to trust to but death or victory.

Morano. Then hey for victory and plunder, my lads!

A I R LII. To you, fair ladies.

By bolder steps we win the race.

Pir. Let's haste where danger calls.

Morano. Unless ambition mend its pace;

It totters, nods, and falls.

Pir. We must advance or be undone.

Morano. Think thus, and then the battle's won.

Chorus. With a fa la la, &c.

Morano. You see your booty, your plunder, gentlemen. The *Indians* are just upon us. The great must venture death some way or other, and the less

ceremony about it, in my opinion, the better. But why talk I of death! Those only talk of it, who fear it. Let us all live, and enjoy our conquests. Sound the charge.

A I R LIII. Prince Eugene's march.

*When the tyger roams,
And the timorous flock is in his view,
Fury foams,
He thirsts for the blood of the crew.
His greedy eyes he throws,
Thirst with their number grows,
On he pours, with a wide waste pursuing,
Spreading the plain with a general ruin,
Thus let us charge, and our foes o'erturn :
Vanderbluff. Let us on one and all !
i Pir. How they fly, how they fall !
Morano. For the war, for the prize I burn.*

Vanderbluff. Were they dragons, my lads, as they sit brooding upon treasure, we would fright them from their nests.

Morano. But see, the enemy are advancing to close engagement. Before the onset, we'll demand a parley, and if we can, obtain honourable terms—We are overpower'd by numbers, and our retreat is cut off.

Enter Pohetohee, Cawwakee, Polly, &c. with the Indian army drawn up against the Pirates.

Pob. Our hearts are all ready. The enemy halts. Let the trumpets give the signal.

A I R LIV. The Marlborough.

*Caw. We the sword of justice drawing,
Terror cast in guilty eyes ;
In its beam false courage dies ;
'Tis like lightning keen and awing.
Charge the foe,
Lay them low,
On then and strike the blow.
Hark, victory calls us. See guilt is dismay'd :
The villain is of his own conscience afraid.
In your hands are your lives and your liberties held,
The courage of virtue was never repell'd.*

Pir. Our chief demands a parley.

Pob. Let him advance.

*Art thou Morano, that fell man of prey ?
That foe to justice ?*

Morano. Tremble and obey.

Art thou great Pohetohee styl'd ?

Poh. - - - - - *the same.*

I dare avow my actions and my name.

Mor. Thou know'st then, king, thy son there, was my prisoner. Pay us the ransom we demand, allow us safe passage to our ships, and we will give you your lives and liberties.

Pob. Shall robbers and plunderers prescribe rules to right and equity? Insolent madman! Composition with knaves is base and ignominious. Tremble at the sword of justice, rapacious brute.

A I R. LV. Les rats.

Morano. Know then, war's my pleasure.

Am I thus controll'd ?

Both thy heart and treasure

I'll at once unfold.

You, like a miser, scraping, biding,

Rob all the world; you're but mines of gold.

Rage my breast alarms,

War is by kings held right-deciding;

Then to arms, to arms;

With this sword I'll force your bold.

By thy obstinacy, king, thou hast provok'd thy fate;
and so expect me.

Pob. Rapacious fool; by thy avarice thou shalt perish.

Morano. Fall on.

Pob. For your lives and liberties. [*Fight, Pirates beat off.*]

Enter Ducat.

Ducat. A slight wound now would have been a good certificate; but who dares contradict a soldier? 'Tis your common soldiers who must content themselves with mere fighting; but 'tis we officers that run away with the most fame as well as pay. Of all fools, the

fool-hardy are the greatest, for they are not even to be trusted with themselves. Why should we provoke men to turn again upon us, after they are run away? For my own part, I think it wiser to talk of fighting, than only to be talk'd of. The fame of a talking hero will satisfy me; the sound of whose valour amazes and astonishes all peaceable men, women, and children. Sure a man may be allow'd a little lying in his own praise, when there's so much going about to his discredit. Since every other body gives a man less praise than he deserves, a man, in justice to himself, ought to make up deficiencies. Without this privilege, we should have fewer good characters in the world than we have.

A I R LVI. Mad Robin.

*How faultless does the nymph appear,
When her own hand the picture draws!
But all others only smear
Her wrinkles, cracks, and flaws.
Self-flattery is our claim and right,
Let men say what they will;
Sure we may set our good in fight,
When neighbours set our ill.*

So, for my own part, I'll no more trust my reputation in my neighbours hands than my money. But will turn them both myself to the best advantage.

Enter Pohetohee, Cawwakee, and Indians.

Pob. Had *Marano* been taken or slain, our victory had been complete.

Ducat. A hare may escape from a mastiff. I could not be a greyhound too.

Pob. How have you disposed of the prisoners?

Caw. They are all under safe guard, till the king's justice, by their exemplary punishment, deters others from the like barbarities.

Pob. But all our troops are not as yet return'd from the pursuit: I am too for speedy justice, for in that there is a sort of clemency. Besides, I would not have my private thoughts worried by mercy to pardon such wretches. I cannot be answerable for the frailties of my nature.

Caw. The youth who rescu'd me from these cruel men is missing; and amidst all our successes I cannot feel happiness. I fear he is among the slain. My gratitude interested itself so warmly in his safety, that you must pardon my concern. What hath victory done for me? I have lost a friend.

AIR LVII. Thro' the wood, laddy.

*As fits the sad turtle alone on the spray;
His heart sorely beating,
Sad murmur repeating;
Indulging his grief for his consort astray;
For force or death only could keep her away.
Now he thinks of the fowler, and every snare;
If guns have not slain her,
The net must detain her,
Thus he'll rise in my thoughts, every hour with
a tear,
If safe from the battle he do not appear.*

Pob. Dead or alive, bring me intelligence of him; for I share in my son's affliction. *[Exit Indian.]*

Ducat. I had better too be upon the spot, or my men may embezzle some plunder which by right should be mine. *[Exit.]*

Enter Indian.

Indian. The youth, sir, with a party is just return'd from the pursuit. He's here to attend your majesty's commands.

Enter Polly, and Indians.

Caw. Pardon, sir, the warmth of my friendship, if I fly to meet him, and for a moment intercept his duty. *[Embracing.]*

AIR LVIII. Clasp'd in my dear Melinda's arms.

Polly. *Victory is our's.*

Caw. *----- My fond heart is at rest.*

Polly. *Friendship thus receives its guest.*

Caw. *O what transport fills my breast!*

Polly. *Conquest is complete.*

Caw. *Now the triumph's great.*

Polly. *In your life is a nation blest.*

Caw. *In your life I'm of all possess'd.*

Pob. The obligations my son hath receiv'd from you, makes me take a part in his friendship. In your safety victory has been doubly kind to me. If *Morano* hath escap'd, justice only reserves him to be punish'd by another hand.

Polly. In the rout, sir, I overtook him, flying with all the cowardice of guilt upon him. Thousands have false courage enough to be vicious; true fortitude is founded upon honour and virtue; that only can abide all tests. I made him my prisoner, and left him without under strict guard, till I receiv'd your majesty's commands for his disposal.

Pob. Sure this youth was sent me as a guardian. Let your prisoner be brought before us.

Enter Morano, guarded.

Morano. Here's a young treacherous dog now, who hangs the husband to come at the wife. There are wives in the world, who would have undertaken that affair to have come at him. Your son's liberty, to be sure, you think better worth than mine; so that I allow you a good bargain if I take my own for his ransom, without a gratuity. You know, king, he is my debtor.

Pob. He hath the obligations to thee of a sheep who hath escap'd out of the jaws of the wolf, beast of prey!

Morano. Your great men will never own their debts, that's certain.

Pob. Trifle not with justice, impious man. Your barbarities, your rapine, your murders are now at an end.

Morano. Ambition must take its chance. If I die, I die in my vocation.

AIR LIX. Parson upon *Dorothy*.

The soldiers, who by trade must dare.

The deadly cannon's sounds,

You may be sure, betimes prepare

For fatal blood and wounds.

*The men, who with advent'rous daunce,
Bound from the cord on high,
Must own they have the frequent chance
By broken bones to die.
Since rarely then
Ambitious men,
Like others, lose their breath;
Like these, I hope,
They know a rope
Is but their natural death.*

We must all take the common lot of our professions.

Pob. Would your *European* laws have suffer'd crimes like these to have gone unpunish'd?

Morano. Were all I am worth safely landed, I have wherewithal to make almost any crime sit easy upon me.

Pob. Have ye notions of property?

Morano. Of my own.

Pob. Would not your honest industry have been sufficient to have supported you?

Morano. Honest industry! I have heard talk of it indeed, among the common people, but all great genius's are above it.

Pob. Have you no respect for virtue?

Morano. As a good phrase, sir. But the practisers of it are so insignificant and poor, that they are seldom found in the best company.

Pob. Is not wisdom esteem'd among you?

Morano. Yes, sir: But only as a step to riches and power; a step that raises ourselves, and trips up our neighbours.

Pob. Honour, and honesty, are not these distinguish'd?

Morano. As incapacities and follies. How ignorant are these *Indians*! But indeed I think honour is of some use; it serves to swear upon.

Pob. Have you no consciousness? Have you no shame?

Morano. Of being poor.

Pob. How can society subsist with avarice! Ye are but the forms of men. Beasts would thrust you out of their herd upon that account, and man should cast you out for your brutal dispositions.

Morano. Alexander the Great was more successful.
That's-all.

AIR LX. The collier has a daughter.

*When right or wrong's decided,
In war or civil causes,
We by success are guided
To blame or give applauses.
Thus men exalt ambition,
In power by all commended;
But when it falls from high condition,
Tyburn is well attended.*

Pob. Let justice then take her course, I shall not interfere with her decrees. Mercy too obliges me to protect my country from such violences. Immediate death shall put a stop to your further mischiefs.

Morano. This sentence indeed is hard. Without the common forms of trial! Not so much as the counsel of a Newgate attorney! Not to be able to lay out my money in partiality and evidence! Not a friend perjur'd for me! This is hard, very hard!

Pob. Let the sentence be put in execution. Lead him to death. Let his accomplices be witnesses of it, and afterwards let them be securely guarded till further orders.

AIR LXI. Mad Moll.

Morano. All crimes are judg'd like fornication;

While rich we are honest no doubt.

Fine ladies can keep reputation,

Poor lasses alone are found out.

If justice had piercing eyes,

Like ourselves, to look within,

She'd find power and wealth a disguise

That shelter the worst of our kin. [Exit, guarded.]

Pob. How shall I return the obligations I owe you? Every thing in my power you may command. In making a request, you confer on me another benefit. For gratitude is oblig'd by occasions of making a return: And every occasion must be agreeable, for a grateful mind hath more pleasure in paying than receiving.

Caw. My friendship too is impatient to give you proofs of it. How happy would you make me in allowing me to discharge that duty!

AIR LXII. Prince George.

All friendship is a mutual debt,

Polly. *The contract's inclination:*

Caw. *We never can that bond forget*

Of sweet retaliation.

Polly. *All day, and every day the same,*

We are paying and still owing;

Caw. *By turns we grant, by turns we claim*

The pleasure of bestowing.

Both. *By turns we grant, &c.*

Polly. The pleasure of having serv'd an honourable man is a sufficient return. My misfortunes, I fear, are beyond relief.

Caw. That sigh makes me suffer. If you have a want, let me know it.

Pob. If it is in a king's power, my power will make me happy.

Caw. If you believe me a friend, you are unjust in concealing your distresses from me. You deny me the privilege of friendship; for I have a right to share them, or redress them.

Pob. Can my treasures make you happy?

Polly. Those who have them not, think they can; those who have them, know they cannot.

Pob. How unlike his countrymen!

Caw. While you conceal one want from me, I feel every want for you. Such obstinacy to a friend is barbarity.

Polly. Let not my reflection interrupt the joys of your triumph. Could I have commanded my thoughts, I would have reserv'd them for solitude.

Caw. Those sighs, and that reservedness, are symptoms of a heart in love. A pain that I am yet a stranger to.

Polly. Then you never have been completely wretched.

AIR LXIII. *Blicke Jockey, young and gay.*

*Can words the pain express
Which absent lovers know?
He only mine can guess,
Whose heart hath felt the woe.
'Tis doubt, suspicion, fear,
Seldom hope, oft' despair;
'Tis jealousy, 'tis rage, in brief
'Tis every pang and grief.*

Caw. But does not love often deny itself aid and comfort, by being too obstinately secret?

Polly. One cannot be too open to generosity; that is a sun of universal benignity. In concealing ourselves from it, we but deny ourselves the blessing of its influence.

AIR LXIV. *In the fields in frost and snow.*

*The modest lilly, like the maid,
Its pure bloom defending,
Is of noxious dews afraid,
Soon as even's descending.
Clos'd all night,
Free from blight,
It preserves the native white;
But at morn' unfolds its leaves,
And the vital sun receives.*

Yet why should I trouble your majesty with the misfortunes of so inconsiderable a wretch as I am?

Pob. A king's beneficence should be like the sun. The most humble weed should feel its influence, as well as the most gaudy flower. But I have the nearest concern in any thing that touches you.

Polly. You see then at your feet the most unhappy of women. [*Kneels, he raises her.*]

Caw. A woman! Oh my heart!

Pob. A woman!

Polly. Yes, sir, the most wretched of her sex. In love! married! abandon'd, and in despair!

Pob. What brought you into these countries?

Polly. To find my husband. Why had not the love of virtue directed my heart? But, alas, 'tis outward

appearance alone that generally engages a woman's affections! And my heart is in the possession of the most profligate of mankind.

Pob. Why this disguise?

Polly. To protect me from the violences and insults to which my sex might have exposed me.

Caw. Had she not been married, I might have been happy.

[*Aside.*

Polly. He ran into the madness of every vice. I detest his principles, tho' I am fond of his person to distraction. Could your commands for search and enquiry restore him to me, you reward me at once with all my wishes. For sure my love still might reclaim him.

Caw. Had you conceal'd your sex, I had been happy in your friendship; but now, how uneasy, how restless is my heart!

AIR LXV. Whilst I gaze on *Cblor*.

*Whilst I gaze in fond desiring,
Every former thought is lost;
Sighing, wishing, and admiring,
How my troubled soul is tost!
Hot and cold my blood is flowing,
How it thrills in every vein!
Liberty and life are going,
Hope can ne'er relieve my pain.*

Enter Indian.

Indian. The rest of the troops, sir, are return'd from the pursuit with more prisoners. They attend your majesty's commands.

Pob. Let them be brought before us. [*Exit Indian.*]
Give not yourself up to despair; for every thing in my power you may command. [*To Polly.*

Caw. And every thing in mine. But, alas, I have none; for I am not in my own!

Enter Ducat and Jenny, guarded, &c.

Jenny. Spare my husband, *Morano* is my husband.

Pob. Then I have reliev'd you from the society of a monster.

Jenny. Alas, sir, there are many husbands who are furious monsters to the rest of mankind, that are the tamest creatures alive to their wives. I can be answerable for his duty and submission to your majesty, for I know I have so much power over him, that I can even make him good.

Pob. Why then had you not made him so before?

Jenny. I was, indeed, like other wives, too indulgent to him; and as it was agreeable to my own humour, I was loth to baulk his ambition. I must, indeed, own too that I had the frailty of pride. But where is the woman who hath not an inclination to be as great and rich as she can be?

Pob. With how much ease and unconcern these Europeans talk of vices, as if they were necessary qualifications.

AIR LXVI. *The Jamaica.*

Jenny. *The sex, we find,
Like men inclin'd
To guard against reproaches;
And none neglect
To pay respect
To rogues who keep their coaches.*

Indeed, sir, I had determin'd to be honest myself, and to have made him so too, as soon as I had put myself upon a reasonable foot in the world; and that is more self-denial than is commonly practis'd.

Pob. Woman, your profligate sentiments offend me; and you deserve to be cut off from society, with your husband. Mercy would be scarce excusable in pardoning you. Have done then. *Morano* is now under the stroke of justice.

Jenny. Let me implore your majesty to respite his sentence. Send me back again with him into slavery, from whence we escap'd. Give us an occasion of being honest, for we owe our lives and liberties to another.

Duc. Yes, sir, I find some of my run-away slaves among the crew; and I hope my services at least will allow me to claim my own again.

Jenny. *Morano*, sir, I must confess hath been a free liver, and a man of so many gallantries, that no woman

could escape him. If *Macbeath's* misfortunes were known, the whole sex would be in tears.

Polly. Macbeath!

Jenny. He is no black, fir, but under that disguise, for my sake, skreen'd himself from the claims and importunities of other women. May love intercede for him?

Polly. Macbeath! Is it possible? Spare him, save him, I ask no other reward.

Pob. Haste, let the sentence be suspended. [*Ex. Ind.*]

Polly. Fly; a moment may make me miserable. Why could not I know him? All his distresses brought upon him by my hand! Cruel love, how could'st thou blind me so?

AIR LXVII. *Tweed side.*

*The stag, when chas'd all the long day
O'er the lawn, thro' the forest and brake;
Now panting for breath and at bay,
Now stemming the river or lake;
When the treacherous scent is all cold,
And at eve he returns to his hind,
Can her joy, can her pleasure be told?
Such joy and such pleasure I find.*

But, alas, now again reflection turns fear upon my heart. His pardon may come too late, and I may never see him more.

Pob. Take hence that profligate woman. Let her be kept under strict guard till my commands.

Jenny. Slavery, fir, slavery is all I ask. Whatever becomes of him, spare my life; spare an unfortunate woman. What can be the meaning of this sudden turn! Consider, fir, if a husband be never so bad, a wife is bound to duty.

Pob. Take her hence, I say; let my orders be obey'd.
[*Exit Jenny, guarded.*]

Polly. What, no news yet? Not yet return'd!

Carw. If justice hath overtaken him, he was unworthy of you.

Polly. Not yet! Oh how I fear.

AIR LXVIII. One evening as I lay.

*My heart forebodes he's dead:
That thought how can I bear?
He's gone, for ever fled,
My soul is all despair!
I see him pale and cold,
The noose hath stop'd his breath,
Just as my dream foretold;
Oh had that sleep been death!*

Enter Indians.

Polly. He's dead, he's dead! Their looks confess it. Your tongues have no need to give it utterance to confirm my misfortunes! I know, I see, I feel it! Support me! O *Macbeath*!

Duc. Mercy upon me! now I look upon her nearer, bless me, it must be *Polly*. This woman, sir, is my slave, and I claim her as my own. I hope, if your majesty thinks of keeping her, you will reimburse me, and not let me be a loser. She was an honest girl to be sure, and had too much virtue to thrive; for, to my knowledge, money could not tempt her.

Pob. And if she is virtuous, *European*, dost thou think I'll act the infamous part of a ruffian, and force her? 'Tis my duty, as a king, to cherish and protect virtue.

Caw. Justice hath reliev'd you from the society of a wicked man. If an honest heart can recompence your loss, you would make me happy in accepting mine. I hope my father will consent to my happiness.

Pob. Since your love of her is founded upon the love of virtue and gratitude, I leave you to your own disposal.

Caw. What, no reply?

Polly. Abandon me to my sorrows. For in indulging them is my only relief.

Pob. Let the chiefs have immediate execution. For the rest, let them be restor'd to their owners, and return to their slavery.

AIR LXIX. Buff-coat.

Caw. *Why that languish!*
 Polly. *Oh he's dead! O he's lost for ever!*
 Caw. *Cease your anguish, and forget your grief,*
 Polly. *Ah, never!*
What air, grace, and stature!
 Caw. *How false in his nature!*
 Polly. *To virtue my love might have won him.*
 Caw. *How base and deceiving!*
 Polly. *But love is believing.*
 Caw. *Vice, at length, as 'tis meet, hath undone him.*

By your consent you might at the same time give me happiness, and procure your own. My titles, my treasures, are all at your command.

AIR LXX. An Italian Ballad.

Polly. *Frail is ambition, how weak the foundation!*
Riches have wings as inconstant as wind;
My heart is proof against either temptation,
Virtue, without them, contentment can find.

I am charm'd, prince, with your generosity and virtues. 'Tis only by the pursuit of those we secure real happiness. Those that know and feel virtue in themselves, must love it in others. Allow me to give a decent time to my sorrows. But my misfortunes at present interrupt the joys of victory.

Caw. Fair princess, for so I hope shortly to make you, permit me to attend you, either to divide your griefs, or, by conversation, to soften your sorrows.

Pob. 'Tis a pleasure to me by this alliance to recompence your merits [*Exit Caw. and Polly.*] Let the sports and dances then celebrate our victory. [*Exit.*]

DANCE.

AIR LXXI. The temple.

1 Ind. *Justice long forbearing,*
Power or riches never fearing,
Slow, yet persevering,
Hunts the villain's pace.
 Chor. *Justice long, &c.*

216 · A TABLE OF THE AIRS.

XXXI. <i>How many men have found the skill.</i>	177
XXXII. <i>Fine women are devils, complete in their way.</i>	ib.
XXXIII. <i>Tho' different passions rage by turns.</i>	179
XXXIV. <i>The world is always jarring.</i>	180
XXXV. <i>In love and life the present use.</i>	181
XXXVI. <i>We never blame the forward swain.</i>	182
XXXVII. <i>My heart is by love forsaken.</i>	ib.
XXXVIII. <i>By halves no friend.</i>	183
XXXIX. <i>If husbands sit unsteady.</i>	184
XL. <i>The body of the brave may be taken.</i>	185
XLI. <i>For gold you sacrifice your fame.</i>	186
XLII. <i>When gold is in hand.</i>	187
XLIII. <i>Honour calls me from thy arms.</i>	188
XLIV. <i>Honour plays a bubble's part.</i>	189
XLV. <i>When ambition's ten years toils.</i>	190
XLVI. <i>Despair leads to battle, &c.</i>	191
XLVII. <i>Virtue's treasure.</i>	192
XLVIII. <i>The sportsmen keep hawks, &c.</i>	194

A C T III.

XLIX. <i>What man can on virtue or courage repose.</i>	195
L. <i>Love with beauty is flying.</i>	196
LI. <i>When horns, with cheerful sound.</i>	197
LII. <i>By bolder steps we win the race.</i>	199
LIII. <i>When the tyger roams.</i>	200
LIV. <i>We the sword of justice drawing.</i>	ib.
LV. <i>Know then, war's my pleasure.</i>	201
LVI. <i>How faultless does the nymph appear.</i>	202
LVII. <i>As fits the sad turtle alone on the spray.</i>	203
LVIII. <i>Victory is our's.</i>	ib.
LIX. <i>The soldiers, who by trade must dare.</i>	204
LX. <i>When right or wrong's decided.</i>	206
LXI. <i>All crimes are judg'd like fornication.</i>	ib.
LXII. <i>All friendship is a mutual debt.</i>	207
LXIII. <i>Can words the pain express.</i>	208
LXIV. <i>The modest lilly, like the maid.</i>	ib.
LXV. <i>Whilst I gaze in fond desiring.</i>	209
LXVI. <i>The sex, we find.</i>	210
LXVII. <i>The flag, when clos'd all the long day.</i>	211
LXVIII. <i>My heart forebodes he's dead.</i>	212
LXIX. <i>Why that languish.</i>	213
LXX. <i>Frail is ambition, how weak the foundation.</i>	ib.
LXXI. <i>Justice long forbearing.</i>	ib.

A C H I L L E S :

A N O P E R A.

———deceperat omnes

(In quibus Ajacem) sumptæ fallacia vestis.

OVID. Metam. lib. xiii.

Naturam expellas furcâ licet, usque recurret.

HOR.

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. GAY.

Spoken by Mr. QUIN.

*I Wonder not our Author doubts success;
One in his circumstance can do no less.
The dancer on the rope that tries at all,
In each unpractis'd caper, risques a fall:
I own I dread his ticklish situation;
Critics detest poetic innovation.
Had Ic'rus been content with solid ground,
The giddy vent'rous youth had ne'er been drown'd.
The Pegasus of old had fire and force,
But your true modern is a carrier's horse,
Drawn by the foremost bell, afraid to stray;
Bard following bard, jogs on the beaten way.
Why is this man so obstinate an elf?
Will he, alone, not imitate himself?*

*His scene now shews the heroes of old Greece;
But how? 'tis monstrous! In a comic piece.
To buskins, plumes, and helmets what pretence,
If mighty chiefs must speak but common sense?
Shall no bold diction, no poetic rage,
Come at our mouths and thunder on the stage?
No—'tis Achilles, as he came from Chiron,
Just taught to sing as well as wield cold iron;
And whatsoever critics may suppose,
Our author holds, that what he spoke was prose.*

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Lycomedes,	Mr. <i>Quin.</i>
Diphilus,	Mr. <i>Aston.</i>
Achilles,	Mr. <i>Salway.</i>
Ulysses,	Mr. <i>Chapman.</i>
Diomedes,	Mr. <i>Laguerre.</i>
Ajax,	Mr. <i>Hall.</i>
Periphas,	Mr. <i>Walker.</i>
Agyrtes,	Mr. <i>Leveridge.</i>

WOMEN.

Thetis,	Mrs. <i>Buchanan.</i>
Theaspe,	Mrs. <i>Cantrel.</i>
Deïdamia,	Miss <i>Norfa.</i>
Lesbia,	Miss <i>Binks.</i>
Philoe,	Miss <i>Oates.</i>
Artemona,	Mrs. <i>Egleton.</i>

Courtiers, Guards, &c.

SCENE, *Scyras.*

A C H I L L E S :

A N O P E R A .

A C T I.

SCENE, *The Palace.*

THETIS, ACHILLES.

THETIS.

BEFORE I leave you, child, I must insist upon your promise, that you will never discover yourself without my leave. Don't look upon it as capricious fondness, nor think (because 'tis a mother's advice) that, in duty to yourself, you are oblig'd not to follow it.

Ach. But my character! my honour! — Wou'd you have your son live with infamy? — On the first step of a young fellow, depends his character for life. — I beg you, goddess, to dispense with your commands.

Thet. Have you then no regard to my presentiment? I can't bear the thoughts of your going; for I know that odious siege of *Troy* wou'd be the death of thee.

Ach. Because you have the natural fears of a mother, wou'd you have me insensible that I have the heart of a man? The world, madam, must look upon my absconding in this manner, and at this particular juncture, as infamous cowardice.

A I R I. A clown in *Flanders* once there was.

What's life? No curse is more severe,

Than bearing life with shame.

Is this your fondness; this your care?

O give me death with fame!

Thet. Keep your temper, *Achilles*:—"Tis both impious and undutiful to call my prescience in question.

Acb. Pardon me, goddess, for had you, like other mothers, been a mere woman only, I shou'd have taken the liberty of other sons, and shou'd (as 'tis my duty) have heard your advice, and follow'd my own.

Thet. I positively shall not be easy, child, unless you give me your word and honour.—You know my commands.

Acb. My word, madam, I can give you; but my honour is already sacrific'd to my duty. That I gave you, when I submitted to put on this woman's habit.

Thet. Believe me, *Achilles*, I have a tender regard for your honour, as well as life.—By preventing your running head-long to your destiny, I preserve you for future glory. Therefore, child, I once more insist upon your solemn promise.

Acb. Was I a woman (as I appear to be) I cou'd, without difficulty, give you a promise, to have the pleasure of breaking it; but when I promise, my life is pledg'd for the performance.—Your commands, madam, are sacred.—Yet I intreat you, goddess, to consider the ignominious part you make me act.—In obeying you, I prove myself unworthy of you.

Thet. My will, *Achilles*, is not to be controverted. Your life depends upon your duty; and positively, child, you shall not go to this siege.

AIR II. Gudgeon's song.

Why thus am I held at defiance?

A mother, a goddess obey!

Will men never practise compliance,

Till marriage hath taught 'em the way?

Acb. But why must I lead the life of a woman? why was I stolen away from my preceptor? Was I not as safe under the care of *Chiron*?—I know the love he had for me; I feel his concern; and I dare swear that good creature is now so distress'd for the loss of me, that he will quite founder himself with galloping from place to place to look after me.

Thet. I'll hear no more. Obey, and seek to know no further.—Can you imagine that I wou'd have taken

all this trouble to have lodg'd you under the protection of *Lycomedes*, if I had not seen the absolute necessity of it?

Ach. Were I allow'd to follow my inclinations, what wou'd you have to fear?—I shou'd do my duty, and die with honour.—Was I to live an age, I cou'd do no more.

Thet. You are so very obstinate, that really, child, there is no enduring you.—Your impatience seems to forget that I am a goddess: Have I not degraded myself into the character of a distress'd *Grecian* princess? 'Tis owing to my artifice and insinuation that we have the protection of the king of *Scyros*. Have I not won *Lycomedes*'s friendship and hospitality to that degree as to place you, without the least suspicion, among his daughters?—And for what, dear *Achilles*?—Your safety and future fame requir'd it.

Ach. 'Tis impossible, madam, to bear it much longer.—My words, my actions, my aukward behaviour, must one day inevitably discover me.—I had been safer under the tuition of *Chiron*.

Thet. Hath not the prophet *Calchas* persuaded the confederates, that the success of their expedition against *Troy* depends upon your being among 'em? Have they not emissaries and spies almost every where in search of you? 'Tis here only, and in this disguise, that I can believe you out of the reach of suspicion.—You have so much youth, and such a bloom, that there is no man alive but must take you for a woman. What I am most afraid of is, that when you are among the ladies you shou'd be so little master of your passions as to find yourself a man.

AIR III. Did you ever hear of a gallant sailor.

Ach. The woman always in temptation,
Must do what nature bids her do;
Our hearts feel equal palpitation,
For we've unguarded minutes too.

By nature greedy,
When lank and needy,

Within your fold the wolf confine ;

Then bid the glutton

Not think of mutton ;

Can you persuade him not to dine ?

Thet. Now, dear child, let me beg you to be discreet.—I have some sea-affairs that require my attendance, which (much against my will) oblige me, for a time, to leave you to your own conduct.

Enter Artemona.

Art. The princesses, lady *Pyrrha*, have been sitting at their embroidery above a quarter of an hour, and are perfectly miserable for want of you.

Thet. *Pyrrha* is so very unhandy, and so monstrously awkward at her needle, that I know she must be diverting. Her passion for romances (as you must have observ'd in other girls) took her off from every part of useful education.

Ach. For the many obligations I have to the princesses, I should (no doubt) upon all occasions shew myself ready to be the butt of their ridicule.—'Tis a duty that all great people expect from (what they call) their dependants.

Art. How can you, lady *Pyrrha*, misinterpret a civility? I know they have a friendship, an esteem for you; and have a pleasure in instructing you.

Thet. For heaven's sake, *Pyrrha*, let not your capitious temper run away with your good manners. You cannot but be sensible of the king's and their civilities, both to you and me.—How can you be so horridly out of humour?

Ach. All I mean, madam, is; that when people are sensible of their own defects, they are not the proper objects of ridicule.

Thet. You are so very touchy, *Pyrrha*, that there is no enduring you.—How can you be so unsociable a creature as to deny a friend the liberty of laughing at your little follies and indiscretions? For what do you think women keep company with one another?

Ach. Because they hate one another, despise one another, and seek to have the pleasure of seeing and exposing one another's faults and follies.

Tbet. Now, dear *Pyrrha*, tell me, is work a thing you pique yourself upon? Suppose too they shou'd smile at an absurdity in your dress, it could not be such a mortification as if (like most women) you had made it the chief business of your life?

Art. Don't they treat one another with equal familiarity?

Act. But a reply from me (whatever was the provocation) might be look'd upon as impertinent. I hate to be under the restraint of civility when I am ill-us'd.

Art. Will you allow me, madam, to make your excuses to the princesses?—The occasion of your highness's leaving her, I see, troubles her.—Perhaps I may interrupt conversation.

Tbet. 'Tis astonishing, child, how you can have so little complaisance. This sullen behaviour of your's must be disagreeable. I hope, madam, she is not always in this way?

Art. Never was any creature more entertaining! Such spirits, and so much vivacity? The princesses are really fond of her to distraction.—The most chearful tempers are liable to the spleen, and 'tis an indulgence that one woman owes to another.

Act. The spleen, madam, is a female frailty that I have no pretensions to, nor any of its affections.

AIR IV. Si vous vous moquez de nous.

*When a woman sullen fits,
And wants breath to conquer reason,
Always these affected fits
Are in season:
Since 'tis in her disposition,
Make her be her own physician.*

Nay, dear madam, you shall not go without me.—Though I have my particular reasons to be out of humour, I cannot be deficient in good-manners.

Art. I know they would take it mortally ill if they thought your complaisance had put yourself under the least restraint.

Ach. I can't forgive myself for my behaviour.—
You must excuse me, madam; for absence in conversation is an incivility that I am but too liable to.

Art. You know we all rally you upon your being in love, as that is one of its most infallible symptoms.

Thet. I charge you, upon my blessing;—as you expect fame, glory, immortality, obey me. [*To Achilles.*

[*Thetis kisses him. Exeunt Achilles and Artemona.*
As for his face, his air, his figure, I am not under the least apprehension; all my concern is from the impetuosity of his temper.—Yet, after all, why *shou'd* I fear a discovery? for women have the same passions, though they employ 'em upon different objects.

AIR V. A minuet.

Man's so touchy, a word that's injurious

Wakes his honour; he's sudden as fire.

Woman kindles, and is no less furious

For her trifles, or any desire.

Man is testy,

Or sour, or resty,

If balk'd of honours, or pow'r, or pelf:

Woman's passions can no less molest ye,

And all for reasons she keeps to herself.

He is sudden, he is impatient. What then? Are women less so? Ask almost all servants what they know of their mistresses.—He is wilful, testy, and untractable. Can't thousands of husbands say as much of their wives? Then as for his obstinacy—that can never shew him less a woman. But he hath not that command of his tongue I cou'd wish him: He is too vehement, too severe in his expressions. In this particular, indeed, few women take equal liberties to one another's faces, but they make ample amends for it behind each other's backs; so that, with all these infirmities of man, he may with the least conduct very well pass for a fine spirited woman.—This reflexion hath cur'd my anxiety, and will make me believe him secure.

Enter Lycomedes.

Thet. 'Tis with the utmost gratitude that I return your majesty thanks for the honours and hospitable favours shewn to me and my daughter.

Lycom. You wou'd oblige me more, madam, if your affairs wou'd allow you to accept 'em longer.

Thet. I have presum'd, sir, to trespass further on your generosity, in leaving my daughter under your protection.—I hope *Pyrrha's* behaviour will deserve it.

AIR VI. To you, my dear, and to no other.

*Must then, alas, the fondest mother
Desert her child?*

Lycom. - - - - - *Ab, why this tear?*
She'll in Theaspe find another;
In me, paternal love and care.

Had you taken her with you, my daughters wou'd have been miserable beyond expression. Theirs and her education shall be the same.

Thet. I beg you, sir, not to regard my gratitude like the common obligations of princes; for neither time nor interest can ever cancel it.

Lycom. Affairs of consequence may require your presence. Importunity upon these occasions is troublesome and unhospitable.—I ask no questions, madam, because I chuse not to pry into secrets.

Thet. I can only thank, and rely upon your majesty's goodness.—My duty to the queen, sir, calls me hence, to own my obligations, and receive her commands.

[*Exit.*

Enter Diphilus.

Lycom. The princess *Calista* hath taken her leave; she is but just gone out of the room.

Diph. That *Pyrrha*, sir, was a most delicious piece.

Lycom. With all her little vixen humours, to my taste she is infinitely agreeable.

Diph. Your parting with her, sir, in this easy manner, is astonishing. One too so excessively fond of you!

Lycom. Parting with her, *Diphilus*!

Diph. But no prince alive hath so great a command of his passions.

Lycom. Dear *Dipbilus*, let me understand you.

Dipb. To my knowlege you might have had her.

Lycom. Can I believe thee?

Dipb. I really thought the queen began to be a little uneasy; and, for the quiet of the family (since she is gone) I must own I am heartily glad of it.

AIR VII. *John* went suing unto *Joan*.

How your patience had been try'd,

Had this haughty dame comply'd!

What's a mistress and a wife?

Joy for moments, plague for life.

Lycom. I am not so unhappy, *Dipbilus*.—Her mother hath left her to my care.

Dipb. Just as I wish'd.

Lycom. Wou'd she had taken her with her!

Dipb. It might have been better. For beyond dispute, sir, both you and the queen wou'd have been easier.

Lycom. Why did she trust her to me?

Dipb. There cou'd be but one reason.

Lycom. I cannot answer for myself.

Dipb. 'Twas upon that very presumption you was trusted.

Lycom. Wou'd I could believe thee!

Dipb. 'Tis an apparent manifest scheme, sir; and you wou'd disappoint both mother and daughter if your majesty did not betray your trust.—You love her, sir, you say.

Lycom. To distraction, *Dipbilus*.

Dipb. And was the betraying a trust ever as yet an obstacle to that passion? What wou'd you have a mother do more upon such an occasion? Ladies of her rank cannot transact an affair of this kind, but with some *decorum*.

Lycom. But you can never suppose *Pyrrha* knows any thing of the matter.

Dipb. Why not, sir?

Lycom. From me she cannot; for I have never as yet made any downright professions.

Dipb. There lies the true cause of her thoughtfulness; 'tis nothing but anxiety, for fear her scheme

should not take place; for, no doubt, her mother hath instructed her not to be too forward, to make you more so.—Believe me, sir, you will have no difficulties in this affair, but those little ones that every woman knows how to practise to quicken a lover.

Lycom. Be it as it will, *Dipbilus*, I must have her.

Diph. Had I been acquainted with your pleasure sooner, your majesty by this time had been tir'd of her—How happy shall I make her, if I may have the honour of your majesty's commands to hint your passion to her!

Lycom. Never did eyes receive a passion with such coldness, such indifference!

AIR VIII. Groom's complaint.

*When'er my looks have spoke desire,
I sigh'd, I gaz'd in vain;
No glance confess'd her secret fire;
And eyes the heart explain.*

Diph. Though 'tis what she wishes, what she longs for, what she sighs for, respect and awe are a restraint upon her eyes as well as tongue. I have often told you, sir, she dares not understand you; she dares not believe herself so happy.

Lycom. This ring, *Dipbilus*—I must leave the rest to your discretion.

Diph. There may be a manner in giving it her, a little hint or so—but the present will speak for itself; 'tis the most successful advocate of love, and never wants an interpreter.

Lycom. Say every thing for me, *Dipbilus*; for I feel I cannot speak for myself.

Diph. Cou'd I be as successful in all my other negotiations! Yet there may be difficulties, for, if I mistake not, the lady hath something of the coquette about her; and what self-denial will not those creatures suffer to give a lover anxiety!

AIR IX. O'er Bogie.

*Observe the wanton kitten's play,
When'er a mouse appears;
You there the true coquette survey
In all her flirting airs:*

*Now pawing,
Now clawing,
Now in fond embrace,
Till 'midst her freaks,
He from her breaks,
Steals off, and bilks the chase.*

Lycom. Dear *Diphilus*, what do you mean? I never saw a woman so little of that character.

Diph. Pardon me, sir; your situation is such, that you can never see what mankind really are. In your presence every one is acting a part; no one is himself, and was it not for the eyes and tongues of your faithful servants, how little wou'd your subjects be known to you! Though she is so prim and reserv'd before you, she is never at a loss for airs to draw all the young flirting lords of the court about her.

Lycom. Beauty must always have its followers.

Diph. If I mistake not, general *Ajax* too (who is sent to solicit your quota for the *Trojan* war) hath another solicitation more at heart.——But suppose she had ten thousand lovers; a woman's prevalent passion is ambition, which must answer your ends.——The queen is coming this way, and her commands may detain me.—I go, sir, to make *Pyrrha* the happiest creature upon earth. [Exit.]

Enter Theaspe.

Theaspe. I think the princess *Calista* might as well have taken her daughter with her.—That girl is so intolerably forward, that I cannot imagine such conversation can possibly be of any great advantage to your daughters' education.

Lycom. You seem of late to have taken an aversion to the girl. She hath spirit and vivacity, but not more than is becoming the sex; and I never saw any thing in her behaviour but what was extremely modest.

Theaspe. For heaven's sake, sir, allow me to believe my own eyes. Her forwardness must give the fellows some encouragement, or there wou'd not be that intolerable flutter about her.—But perhaps she hath some reasons to be more upon her guard before you.

Lycom. How can you be so unreasonably censorious?

Theaspe. I can see her faults, fir. I see her as a woman sees a woman. The men, it seems, think the awkward creature handsome.

AIR X. *Dutch skipper.* First part.

Lycom. *When woman's censorious,
And attacks the meritorious;
In the scandal she shews her own malicious thought.
If real guilt she blames,
Then pride her heart inflames;
And she fancies she's better for another's fault.
Thus seeking to disclose
The slips of friends and foes,
By her envy she does herself alone expose.*

Nay, dear child, your attacking her in this peevish way can be nothing but downright antipathy.

Theaspe. Nay, dear fir, your defending her in this feeling manner can be nothing but downright partiality.

Lycom. I own myself partial to distress, and I see her in that circumstance.

Theaspe. But there are other reasons that may make a man partial.

AIR XI. *Dutch skipper.* Second part.

*As you, fir, are my husband, no doubt you're prone
To turn each new face
To a wife's disgrace;
And for no other cause, but that she's your own;
Nay, fir, 'tis an evident case.
'Tis strange that all husbands should prove so blind,
That a wife's real merits they ne'er can find,
Tho' they strike all the rest of mankind.*

Lycom. How can you be so ridiculous? By these airs, madam, you would have me believe you are jealous.

Theaspe. Whence had you this contemptible opinion of me? Jealous! If I was so, I have a spirit above owning it. I wou'd never heighten your pleasure by letting you have the satisfaction of knowing I was uneasy.

Lycom. Let me beg you, my dear, to keep your temper.

Theaspe. Since I have been so unguarded as to own

it; give me leave to tell you, fir, that was I of a lower rank it wou'd keep you in some awe, because you wou'd then know I cou'd take my revenge.

Lycom. You forget your duty, child.

Theaspe. There is a duty too due from a husband.

Lycom. How can you give way to these passions?

Theaspe. Because you give way to your's.

Lycom. But to be so unreasonably jealous!

Theaspe. Unreasonably! Wou'd it were so!

AIR XII. Black joke.

Lycom. *Then must I bear eternal strife,*

Both night and day put in mind of a wife;

By her pouts, spleen, and passionate airs!

Theaspe. *D'ye think I'll bear eternal slight,*

And not complain when I'm robb'd of my right!

Call you this, fir, but whimsical fears?

Lycom. *Can nought then still this raging storm?*

Theaspe. *Yes. What you promis'd, if you'd perform.*

Lycom. *Pr'ythee teaze me no more.*

Theaspe. *I can never give o'er,*

Till I find you as fond and as kind as before.

Lycom. *Will you ne'er ask*

A possible task?

Wou'd you have me so unhospitable as to deny her my protection?

Theaspe. 'Tis not, fir, that I presume to controul you in your pleasures. — Yet you might, methinks, have shew'd that tenderness for me, to have acted with a little more reserve. Women are not so blind as husbands imagine. — Were there no other circumstances, — your coolness to me, your indifference. — How I despise myself for this confession! — Pardon me, fir, love made me thus indiscreet.

AIR XIII. Ye shepherds and nymphs.

Theaspe, weeping.

O love, plead my pardon, nor plead it in vain;

'Twas you that was jealous, 'twas you was in pain;

Yet why should you speak? To what purpose or end?

I must be unhappy if love can offend.

Yet was ever a design of this kind so manifest, so bare-fac'd !

AIR XIV. The goddesses.

Theaspe, angry.

*To what a pitch is man profuse,
And all for ostentatious pride !
Ev'n misses are not kept for use,
But for mere show, and nought beside.
For might a wife speak out,
She cou'd prove beyond all doubt,
With more than enough he was supply'd.*

The princess *Calista* hath shewn an uncommon confidence in your majesty. The woman no doubt depends upon it, that her daughter's charms are not to be resisted.

Lycom. Nay, dear child, don't be scandalous.

AIR XV. *Joan's* placket.

*Reputations hack'd and hew'd,
Can never be mended again ;
Yet nothing stints the tattling prude,
Who joys in another's pain.
Thus while she rends
Both foes and friends,
By both she's torn in twain.
Reputations hack'd and hew'd,
Can never be mended again.*

Theaspe. You are in so particular a manner oblig'd to her, that I am not surpris'd at your taking her part.

Lycom. But, dear madam, why at present is all this violent fluster ?

Theaspe. Ask your own heart, ask your own conduct. Those can best inform you.—'Twou'd have been more obliging if *Pyrrha* and you had kept me out of this impudent secret.—You know, sir, I have reason.

Lycom. If one woman's virtue depended upon another's suspicions, where shou'd we find a woman of common modesty ! Indeed, I think you injure her : I believe her virtuous.

Theaspe. When a man hath ruin'd a woman, he

thinks himself oblig'd in honour to stand up for her reputation.

Lycom. If you will believe only your own unaccountable suspicions, and are determin'd not to hear reason, I must leave you to your perverse humours.—What would you have me say? What would you have me do?

Theaspe. Shew your hospitality (as you call it) to me, and put that creature out of the palace.

Lycom. I have a greater regard to your's and my own quiet, than ever to comply with the extravagant passions of a jealous woman.

Theaspe. You have taken then your resolutions, I find; and I am sentenc'd to neglect—Did ever a woman marry but with the probability of having at least one man in her power?—What a wretched wife am I! [Weeps.]

Lycom. Jealousy from a wife, even to a man of quality, is now look'd upon as ill-manners, though the affair be never so public.—But without a cause!—I beg you, madam, to say no more upon this subject.

Theaspe. Though you, sir, may think her fit company for you; methinks the very same reasons might tell you that she is not so very reputable a companion for your daughters.

Lycom. Since a passionate woman will only believe herself, I must leave you, madam, to enjoy your obstinacy. I know but that way of putting an end to the dispute.

AIR XVI. We've cheated the parson, &c.

*Though woman's glib tongue, when her passions are fir'd,
Eternally go, a man's ear can be tir'd.*

*Since woman will have both her word and her way,
I yield to your tongue; but my reason obey.*

I obey,

Nothing say,

Since woman will have both her word and her way. [Exit.]

Theaspe. Wou'd I had been more upon the reserve! But husbands are horridly provoking; they know the frailty of the sex, and never fail to take the advantage

of our passions to make us expose ourselves by contradiction.—*Artemona.*

Enter Artemona.

Art. Madam.

Theaspe. Is that creature, that (what do you call her) that princess gone?

Art. Yes, madam.

Theaspe. Why did she not take that awkward thing, her daughter, with her?

Art. The advantages she might receive in her education, might be an inducement to leave her.

Theaspe. Might *that* be an inducement?

Art. Besides, in her present circumstance, it might be inconvenient to take her daughter with her.

Theaspe. Can't you find out any other reason for leaving her?

Art. Your courtesy, madam; your hospitality.

Theaspe. No *other* reason!

Art. No other reason?

Theaspe. Wou'd I cou'd believe there was no other!

Art. 'Tis not for me to pry into your majesty's secrets.

Theaspe. I hate a girl that is so intolerably forward.

Art. I never observ'd any thing but those little liberties that girls of her age will take, when they are among themselves.—Perhaps those particular distinctions the princesses shew her, may have made her too familiar.—I am not, madam, an advocate for her behaviour.

Theaspe. A look so very audacious! Now the filthy men, who love every thing that is impudent, call that spirit.—But there are, *Artemona*, some particular distinctions from a certain person, who of late hath been very particular to me, that might *indeed* make her too familiar.

Art. Heaven forbid!

Theaspe. How precarious is the happiness of a wife, when it is in the power of every new face to destroy it!—Now, dear *Artemona*, tell me sincerely, don't you, from what you yourself have observed, think I have reason to be uneasy?

Art. That I have observ'd!

Theaspe. Dear *Artemona*, don't frighten thyself,—I am not accusing, but talking to you as a friend.

A I R XVII. Fairy elves.

Art. O guard your hours from care,
Of jealousy beware;
For she with fancy'd sprites,
Herself torments and frights.
Thus she frets, and pines, and grieves,
Raising fears that she believes.

Theaspe. I hate myself too for having so much condescension and humility as to be jealous. 'Tis flattering the man that uses one ill; and 'tis wanting the natural pride that belongs to the sex. What a wretched, mean, contemptible figure is a jealous woman! How have I expos'd myself!

Art. Your majesty is safe in the confidence repos'd in me.

Theaspe. That is not the case, *Artemona*. *Lycomedes* knows I am unhappy. I have own'd it, and was so unguarded as to accuse him.

Art. Upon meer suspicion only?

Theaspe. Beyond dispute he loves her. I know it, *Artemona*; and can one imagine that girl hath virtue enough to withstand such a proposal?

A I R XVIII. *Moll Peasly.*

All hearts are a little frail
When temptation is rightly apply'd.
What can shame or fear avail
When we sooth both ambition and pride?
All women have power in view;
Then there's pleasure to tempt her too.
Such a sure attack there's no denying,
No denying;
Since complying
Gives her another's due.

—I can't indeed (if you mean that) positively affirm that he hath yet had her.

Art. Then it may be still only suspicion.

Theaspe. I have trusted too my daughter *Deidamia* with my weakness, that she, by her intimacies and

friendship with *Pyrrha*, may get into her secrets. In short, I have plac'd her as my spy about her.—That girl (out of good-nature, and to prevent family-disputes) may deceive me. She insists upon it, that I have nothing to fear from *Pyrrha*; and is so positive in this opinion, that she offers to be answerable for her conduct.

Art. Why then, madam, will you still believe your own jealousies?

Theasp. All I say is, that *Deidamia* may deceive me; for whatever is in the affair, 'tis impossible but she must know it; I have order'd it so that she is scarce ever from her; they have one and the same bed-chamber; yet such is my distemper, that I suspect every body, and can only believe my own imaginations.—There must be some reason that *Deidamia* hath not been with me this morning.—I am impatient to see her.

AIR XIX. *John Anderson my Jo.*

Art. *Let jealousy no longer
A fruitless search pursue;
You make his flame the stronger,
And wake resentment too.
This self-tormenting care give o'er;
For all you can obtain
Is, what was only doubt before,
To change for real pain.*



A C T II.

DIPHILUS, ACHILLES.

ACHILLES.

I Am very sensible, my lord, of the particular honours that are shewn me.

Diph. Honours, madam! *Lycomedes* is still more particular. How happy must that woman be, whom he respects!

Ach. What do you mean, my lord?

Diph. Let this speak both for him and me: the present is worthy him to give, and you to receive.

Ach. I have too many obligations already.

Diph. 'Tis in your power, madam, to return 'em all.

Ach. Thus I return 'em. And, if you dare be honest, tell him this ring had been a more honourable present to *Thespe*.

AIR XX. Abroad as I was walking.

Diph. [Offering the ring a second time.]

Such homage to her beauty,

What cyness can reject?

Accept, as 'tis your duty,

The tribute with respect.

With love I offer power;

What shame can ever stain thee,

Restrain thee,

Or pain thee,

When blest with such a dower?

'Tis but an earnest, madam, of future favours.—When *Lycomedes*'s power is your's, I intreat your highness not to forget your servant.

Ach. I shall remember thee with contempt and abhorrence.

Diph. I beg you, madam, to consider your present situation.—This uncommon distinction requires a softer answer.

Ach. I shall give no other, my lord.—I dare say, *Diphilus*, you think yourself highly honour'd by your present negotiation.—Is there no office too mean for ambition?—Was you not a man of quality, was you not a favourite, the world, my lord, would call you a pimp, a pander, a bawd, for this very honourable proposal of your's.

Diph. What an unmerciful weapon is a woman's tongue!—I beg your highness to confine yourself within the bounds of common civility, and to consider who I am.

Ach. I do consider it, *Diphilus*, and that makes thee a thousand times the more contemptible.

A I R XXI. Butter'd pease.

*Shou'd the beast of the noblest race
 As the brute of the lowest class;
 Tell me, which do you think more base,
 Or the lion or the ass?
 Boast not then of thy rank or state;
 That but shows thee the meaner slave.
 Take thy due then of scorn and hate,
 As thou'rt but the greater knave.*

Diph. Though the sex have the privilege of unlimited expression, and that a woman's words are not to be resented; yet a lady, madam, may be ill-bred. Ladies too are generally passionate enough without a provocation, so that a reply at present would be unnecessary.

Acb. Are such the friends of power?—How unhappy are princes to have their passions so very readily put in execution, that they seldom know the benefit of reflection! Go, and for once make your report faithfully and without flattery. [Exit.]

Diph. This girl is so excessively ill-bred, and such an arrant termigant, that I could as soon fall in love with a tygress. She hath a handsome face, 'tis true, but in her temper she is a very fury.—But *Lycomedes* likes her; and 'tis not for me to dispute either his taste or pleasure. Notwithstanding she is such a spit-fire, 'tis my opinion the thing may still do! Things of this nature should be always transacted in person, for there are women so ridiculously half-modest, that they are ashamed in words to consent to what (when a man comes to the point) they will make no difficulties to comply with.

Enter Lycomedes.

Lycom. Well, *Diphilus*, in what manner did she receive my present?

Diph. 'Tis my opinion, sir, that she will accept it only from your hands. From me she absolutely refuses it.

AIR XXII. Come open the door, sweet Betty.

Lycom. *What, must I remain in anguish?
And did not her eyes consent?
No sigh, not a blush, nor languish
That promis'd a kind event!
It must be all affection,
The tongue hath her heart bely'd;
That oft hath withstood temptation,
When ev'ry thing else comply'd.*

How did she receive you? Did you watch her eyes? What was her behaviour when you first told her I lov'd her?

Dipb. She seem'd to be desperately disappointed, that you had not told her so yourself.

Lycom. But when you press'd it to her—

Dipb. She had all the resentment and fury of the most complying prude.

Lycom. But did she not soften upon consideration?

Dipb. She seem'd to take it mortally ill of me, that my meddling in the affair had delay'd your majesty's application.

Lycom. What, no favourable circumstance!

Dipb. Nay, I was not in the least surpris'd at her behaviour. Love at second-hand to a lady of her warm constitution! It was a disappointment, sir; and she cou'd not but treat it accordingly.—Whatever was my opinion, 'twas my duty, sir, to obey you; but I found just the reception I expected. Apply to her yourself, sir; answer her wishes, and (if I know any thing of woman) she will then answer your's, and behave herself as she ought.

Lycom. But, dear *Dipbilus*, I grow more and more impatient.

Dipb. That too by this time is her case—To save the appearances of virtue, the most easy woman expects a little gentle compulsion, and to be allow'd the decency of a little feeble resistance. For the quiet of her own conscience, a woman may insist upon acting the part of modesty, and you must comply with her scruples.—You will have no more trouble but what will heighten the pleasure.

Lycom. Pyrrha!—This is beyond my hopes.—*Diphilus*, lay your hand upon my breast. Feel how my heart flutters.

Diph. Did *Pyrrha* feel these assurances of love she wou'd not appear so thoughtful.

Lycom. *Deidamia* too not with her!

Diph. She is with the queen, sir.

Lycom. My other daughters, who seem less fond of her, are in the garden; so all's safe.—Leave me, *Diphilus*, and let none, upon pain of my displeasure, presume to intrude. [Exit *Diph.*

Enter Achilles.

Lycom. Lady *Pyrrha*, my dear child, why so thoughtful?

Ach. Thoughts may not be so respectful; they may be too familiar, too friendly, too true: And who about you presumes to communicate 'em? Words and forms only are for your ear, sir.

Lycom. You know, *Pyrrha*, you was never receiv'd upon the foot of ceremony, but friendship; so that it wou'd be more respectful, if you was less shy and less reserv'd.—'Tis your behaviour, *Pyrrha*, that keeps me at a distance.

Ach. If I was wanting, sir, either in duty to you or myself, my own heart wou'd be the first to reproach me.—Your majesty's generosity is too solicitous upon my account; and your courtesy and affability may even now detain you from affairs of importance—If you have no commands, sir, the princesses expect me in the garden.

Lycom. Nay, positively, my dear *Pyrrha*, you shall not go.

Ach. But why, sir?—For heaven's sake, what hath set you a trembling?—I fear, sir, you are out of order.—Who waits there?

Lycom. I did not call, *Pyrrha*.

Ach. Let me then, sir, know your commands.—

A I R XXIII. *Altro giorno in compagna.*

Lycom. If my passion want explaining,

This way turn and read my eyes;

These will tell thee, without feigning,

What in words I must disguise.

L

Ach. Why do you fix your eyes so intensely upon me?—Speak your pleasure, speak to me then.—Why am I seiz'd?—Spare me, sir, for I have a temper that can't bear provocation.

Lycom. I know there are a thousand necessary affectations of modesty, which women, in decency to themselves, practise with common lovers before compliance.—But my passion, *Pyrrha*, deserves some distinction.

Ach. I beg you then, sir, don't lay violent hands upon me.

Lycom. The present you refus'd from *Dipbilus*, accept from me.

Ach. Why will you persist?—Nay, dear sir, I can't answer for my passions.

Lycom. 'Tis not *Dipbilus*, but I give it you.

Ach. That *Dipbilus*, sir, is your enemy.

Lycom. 'Tis I that offer it.

Ach. Your very worst enemy, your flatterer.

Lycom. You shou'd strive, child, to conquer these extravagant passions.

Ach. How I despise that fellow! that pimp, that pander!

A I R XXIV. Trip to the landry.

How unhappy are the great,

Thus begirt with servile slaves!

Such with praise your reason cheat.

Flatt'ers are the meanest knaves.

They in friendship's guise accost you;

False in all they say or do.

When these wretches have ingross'd you,

Who's the slave, sir, they or you?

Lycom. Is this reproachful language, *Pyrrha*, befitting my presence?

Ach. Nay, dear sir, don't worry me. By *Jove*, you'll provoke me.

Lycom. Your affectation, *Pyrrha*, is intolerable. There's enough of it.—Those looks of aversion are insupportable.—I will have no struggling.

Ach. Then, sir, I must have no violence.

AIR XXV. As I walk'd along *Fleet-street*.

Lycom. *When the fort on no condition
Will admit the gen'rous foe,
Parley but delays submission;
We by storm shou'd lay it low.*

I am in earnest, lady.—I will have no trifling, no coquetting; you may spare those little arts of women, for my passion is warm and vehement enough without 'em—Do you know, *Pyrrha*, that obedience is your duty?

Ach. I know my duty, sir; and, had it not been for that sycophant *Dipbilus*, perhaps you had known your's.

Lycom. I am not, lady, to be aw'd and frighten'd by stern looks and frowns.—Since your obstinate behaviour then makes violence necessary——

Ach. You make self-preservation, sir, as necessary.

Lycom. I won't be refus'd.

AIR XXVI. The lady's New-year's gift.

Why such affectation?

Ach. *Why this provocation?*

Lycom. *Must I bear resistance still!*

Ach. *Check your inclination.*

Lycom. *Dare you then deny me?*

Ach. *You too far may try me.*

Lycom. *Must I then against your will!*

Ach. *Force shall never ply me.*

Lycom. Never was such a termagant!

Ach. By *Jove*, never was such an insult!

Lycom. Will you?—Dare you?—Never was such strength!—[*Achilles pushes him from him with great violence, and throws him down.*]

Ach. Desist then.

Lycom. Audacious fury, know you what you have done?

AIR XXVII. Puppet-show trumpet tune.

[*Achilles holding Lycomedes down.*]

Ach. *What heart hath not courage, by force assail'd,*

To brave the most desperate fight?

'Tis justice and virtue that hath prevail'd;

Power must yield to right.

Lycom. Am I so ignominiously to be got the better of!

Ach. You are.

Lycom. By a woman!

Ach. You now, sir, find you had acted a greater part, if (in spite of your flatterers) you had got the better of your own passions.

Enter Diphilus and Courtiers.

1 Court. An attempt upon the king's life!—The guards! where are the guards?

2 Court. Such an open, barefac'd assassination?

[They seize Achilles, and raise Lycomedes.]

3 Court. And by a woman too!

1 Court. Where are your wounds, sir?

2 Court. Take the dagger from her, that she do no farther mischief.

3 Court. The dagger! Where? What dagger?

1 Court. You will find it somewhere or other concealed; examine her, search her.

Ach. Save your zeal, sirs, for times of real danger. Let *Lycomedes* accuse me.—He knows my offence.

Lycom. How have I expos'd myself!—*Diphilus*, bid these over- officious friends leave me, and, as they value my favour, that they say nothing of what they have seen.—*[Diphilus talks apart with the Courtiers, who go out.]* Though the insult, from any other person had been unpardonable, there are ways that you, madam, might still take to reconcile me.

Ach. Self-defence, sir, is the privilege of mankind. I know your power, but, as I have offended no law, I rely upon your justice.

Lycom. 'Twould be safer, madam, to rely on your own future behaviour.

Ach. Who was the aggressor, sir?

Lycom. Beauty, inclination, love. If you will merit favour you know the conditions.

A I R XXVIII. Old king *Cole*.

No more be coy;

Give a loose to joy,

And let love for thy pardon sue.

A glance cou'd all my rage destroy,

And light up my flame anew.

*For though a man can stand at bay
Against a woman's will;
And keep, amid the loudest fray,
His resolution still:
Yet when consenting smiles accost,
The man in her arms is lost.*

Act. If your resentment wants only the show of justice, let this *honourable* man here be my accuser; it may be necessary for him to trump up a horrid conspiracy to skreen his own infamous practices.

Diph. Your majesty hath had too much confidence in this woman. The lives of kings are sacred, and the matter (trivial as it seems) deserves further inquiry.—There must be some secret villainous design in this affair.

Act. And are not you, *Dipphilus*, conscious of that secret villainous design?

Diph. 'Tis an offence, sir, that is not to be pardon'd. Your dignity, sir, calls upon you (notwithstanding your partiality to her) to make her an example. There must be things of consequence that we are still ignorant of; and she ought to undergo the severest examination.—My zeal for your service, sir, was never as yet at a loss for witnesses upon these occasions. [*To Lycom.*

Lycom. Don't you see the queen coming this way? Have done with this discourse, dear *Dipphilus*, and leave me.—Wou'd I cou'd forget this ridiculous affair! For the present, *Pyrrha*, I trust you to return to the ladies; though (considering your passionate temper) I have little reason to rely on your discretion.

[*Exeunt Achilles and Dipphilus.*

Enter Theaspe and Deidamia.

Theaspe. I thought I had heard *Pyrrha's* voice.

Lycom. A jealous woman's thoughts are her own and her husband's eternal plague; so I beg you, my dear, say no more of her.

Theaspe. And have I no reason but my own thoughts, my liege?

AIR XXIX. *Dicky's walk, in Dr. Faustus.*

What give o'er !

I must and will complain.

Lycm. *You plague us both in vain.*

Theaspe. *You won't then bear a wife !*

Lycm. *I must, it seems, for life.*

Teaze no more.

Theaspe. *Nay, sir, you know 'tis true,*

That 'tis to her I owe my due.

No thanks to you !

It behoves kings, sir, to have the severest guard upon their actions ; for as their great ones are trumpeted by fame, their little ones are as certainly and as widely convey'd from ear to ear by a whisper.

Lycm. These chimerical jealousies, madam, may provoke my patience.

Theaspe. Chimerical jealousies !—And do you really, sir, think your ignominious affair is still a secret !—Am I to be ignorant of a thing that is already whisper'd every where ?

AIR XXX. *Puddings and pyes.*

Lycm. *The slips of a husband you wives*

Will never forget :

Your tongue for the course of our lives

Is never in debt.

'Tis now funning,

And then dunning ;

Intent on our follies alone,

'Tis so fully employ'd that you never can think of your own.

Theaspe. My suspicions have, indeed, wrong'd Pyrrha.—How I respect and honour that girl !—Deidamia, that honourable, that virtuous creature Pyrrha, well deserves both your friendship and mine.—As soon as you have found her bring her to me, that I may acknowledge the merits she hath to me.

[Exit Deidamia.]

After the repulse and disgrace you have very justly met with, you might with reason censure me for want of duty and respect shou'd I upbraid you.—'Tis past ; and if you will never again put me in mind, I chuse to forget it.—Yet, wou'd you reward virtue, and had you any regard for my quiet—

A I R XXXI. My dilding, my dilding.

*Ab! shou'd you ever find her
Complying and kinder;
Though now you have resign'd her;
What then must ensue!
Your flame, though now 'tis over,
Again will recover;
You'll prove as fond a lover,
As I'm now of you.*

Lycom. What wou'd you have me do?

Theaspe. I wou'd have you distrust yourself and remove the temptation.—I have long had it at heart to find a match for my nephew *Periphas*, and I really think we can never meet with a more deserving woman.

Lycom. Whatever scheme you have for her, I shall not interfere with you.—I have had enough of her termagant humours; she hath not the common softness of the sex.—'Tis my opinion, that *Periphas* will not find himself much oblig'd to you; for the man that marries her must either conquer his own passions, or her's, and one of 'em (according to my observation) is not to be conquer'd.

Theaspe. Marriage, sir, hath broke many a woman's spirit; and that will be only his affair.—When he takes her with him, your own family at least will be easy.

Lycom. Her presence just now would be shocking.—I cou'd not stand the shame and confusion.—I see her, and *Deidamia* with her.—Do with her as you please; you have my consent. [Exit.]

Enter Deidamia and Achilles.

Theaspe. The character *Deidamia* hath given of you, and your own behaviour, child, have so charm'd me, that I think I never can sufficiently reward your merits.

Ach. *Deidamia's* friendship may make her partial.—My only merit, madam, is gratitude.

Theaspe. To convince you of the opinion I have of you.—But I must first ask you a question—Don't you think, lady *Pyrrha*, that my nephew *Periphas* is very agreeable?

Ach. That impatience of his, to serve as a volunteer with the troops of *Lycomedes* at the siege of *Troy*, is

becoming his birth.—So much fire, and so much spirit!—I don't wonder your majesty is fond of him.

Theaspe. But I am sure, *Pyrrha*, you must think his person agreeable.

Ach. No woman alive can dispute it.

Theaspe. I don't know, every way, so deserving a young man; and have that influence upon him, and at the same time that regard for him, that I would have him happy.—Don't think, child, that I would make him happy at your expense; for knowing him, I know you will be so.—Was the princess *Calista* here, 'tis a match she cou'd not disapprove of; therefore let that be no obstacle, for every thing, in regard to her, I take upon myself.

Ach. Wou'd you make me the obstacle to his glory? Pardon me, madam, I know myself undeserving.

A I R XXXII. How happy are you and I.

First let him for honour roam,

And martial fame obtain:

Then (if he shou'd come home)

Perhaps I may explain.

Since then alone the hero's deeds

Can make my heart give way;

Till Ilion falls and Hector bleeds,

I must my choice delay.

Theaspe. Nay, *Pyrrha*, I won't take these romantic notions of your's for an answer.—*Deidamia* is so much your friend, that, I am sure, she must be happy with this alliance; so, while I make the proposal to my nephew, I leave you two to talk over the affair together. [Exit.]

Ach. Was there ever a man in so whimsical a circumstance!

Deid. Was there ever a woman in so happy and so unhappy a one as mine!

Ach. Why did I submit? why did I plight my faith thus infamously to conceal myself?—What is become of my honour?

Deid. Ah *Pyrrha*, *Pyrrha*, what is become of mine!

Ach. When shall I behave myself as a man!

Deid. Wou'd you had never behav'd yourself as one!

AIR XXXIII. *Fy gar-rub her o'er with straw.*

*Think what anguish tears my quiet,
Since I suffer'd shame for thee;
Man at large may rove and riot,
We are bound, but you are free,
Are thy vows and oaths mistaken?
See the birds that wing the sky;
These their mates have ne'er forsaken,
Till their young at least can fly.*

Act. Pester'd and worried thus from every quarter;
'tis impossible much longer to prevent discovery!

Deid. Dear, dear *Pyrrha*, confide in me. Any other discovery but to me only wou'd be inevitable perdition to us both.—Am I treated like a common prostitute? Can your gratitude (wou'd I might say love!) refuse to let me know the man to whom I owe my ruin?

Act. You must rely, my dear princess, upon my honour; for I am not, like a fond weak husband, to be teaz'd into the breaking my resolution.

AIR XXXIV. *Beggar's Opera. Hornpipe.*

Know that importunity's in vain.

Deid. Can then nothing move thee?

Act. Ask not, since denial gives me pain.

Deid. Think how much I love thee.

Act. What's a secret in a woman's breast?

Deid. Canst thou thus upbraid me!

Act. Let me leave thy heart and tongue at rest.

Deid. Love then hath betray'd me.

Act. For heaven's sake, *Deidamia*, if you regard my love, give me quiet.—Intreaties, fondness, tears, rage, and the whole matrimonial rhetoric of woman to gain her ends, are all thrown away upon me; for, by the gods, my dear *Deidamia*, I am inexorable.

Deid. But, my dear *Pyrrha* (for you oblige me still to call you by that name) only imagine what must be the consequence of a month or two.—Think of my unhappy condition.—To save my shame (if you are a man of honour) you must then come to some resolution.

Act. Till I deserve these suspicions, *Deidamia*, methinks it wou'd be more becoming your professions of

love to spare 'em.—I have taken my resolutions; and when the time comes, you shall know 'em: till then be easy, and press me no farther.

A I R XXXV. My time, O ye muses.

Deid. How happy my days and how sweet was my rest,
Ere love with his passions my bosom distress'd!
Now I languish with sorrow, I doubt and I fear:
But love hath my all when my Pyrrha is near.
Yet why have I griev'd?—Ye vain passions adieu!
I know my own heart, and I'll think thee as true;
And as you know my heart, 'twould be folly to range;
For who'd be inconstant to lose by the change?

My life, my honour, then I implicitly intrust with you.

Ach. Who wou'd have the trouble of putting on a character that does not naturally belong to him! the life of a hypocrite must be one continual scene of anxiety. When shall I appear as I am, and extricate myself out of this chain of perplexities!—I have no sooner escap'd being ravish'd, but I am immediately to be made a wife.

Deid. But, dear *Pyrrha*, for my sake, for your own, have a particular regard to your behaviour till your resolution is ripe for execution.—You now and then take such intolerable strides, that I vow you have set me a blushing.

Ach. Considering my continual restraint, and how much the part I act differs from my inclinations, I am surpriz'd at my own behaviour.

A I R XXXVI. I am come to your house.

*Your dress, your conversations,
Your airs of joy and pain,
All these are affections
We never can attain.
The sex so often varies,
'Tis nature more than art:
To play their whole vagaries
We must have woman's heart.*

Deid. Your swearing too, upon certain occasions, sounds so very masculine—an oath startles me.—Wou'd I cou'd cure myself of these violent apprehensions!

Act. As for that matter, there are ladies who, in their passions, can take all the liberties of speech.

Deid. Then too, you very often look so agreeably impudent upon me, that, let me die, if I have not been mortally afraid my sisters wou'd find you out.

Act. Impudent ! are women so censorious, that looks cannot escape 'em ?—May not one woman look kindly upon another without scandal ?

Deid. But such looks !—Nay, perhaps I may be particular, and it may be only my own fears ; for (notwithstanding your dress) whenever I look upon you, I have always the image of a man before my eyes.

Act. Do what we will, love at some moments will be unguarded.—But what shall I do about this *Periphas* ?

Deid. His heart is so set upon the siege, that I know you can have but very little persecution upon his account.

Act. Wou'd I cou'd go with him !

Deid. And cou'd you leave me thus ?

Act. Have you only a womanish fondness ? I thought, *Deidamia*, you lov'd me. And you cannot truly love and esteem, if in every circumstance of life you have not a just regard for my honour.

Deid. Dear *Pyrrha*, don't mention it ; the very thought of it kills me. You have set my heart in a most violent palpitation.—Let us talk no more upon this disagreeable subject.—My sisters will grow very impatient.—Shou'd we stay longer together, I might again be importunate and ask to know you ; and I had rather bear the eternal plague of unsatisfied curiosity, than give you a moment's disquiet.—They are now expecting us in the garden, and, considering my present circumstances, I wou'd not give 'em occasion to be impertinent, for of late they have been horribly prying and inquisitive.—Let us go to 'em.

Act. I envy that *Periphas*. His honour, his fame, his glory is not to be shackled by a woman.

A I R XXXVII. The Clarinette.

Act. *Ab, why is my heart so tender !*

My honour incites me to arms :

To love shall I fame surrender ?

By laurels I'll merit thy charms.

Deid. *How can I bear the reflection?*
 Ach. *I balance; and honour gives way.*
 Deid. *Reward my love by affection;*
I ask thee no more than I pay.



A C T III.

THEASPE, PERIPHAS, ARTEDONA.

THEASPE.

PERIPHAS, I have a favour to ask of you, and positively I will not be refus'd.

Per. Your majesty may command.

Theaspe. Nay, nephew, 'tis for your own good.

Per. To obey your commands, madam, must be so.

Theaspe. I am not, *Periphas*, talking to you as a queen, but as a relation, a friend.—I must have no difficulties; therefore I insist upon your absolute promise.

Per. I am not in my own power, madam.—*Lycomedes*, you know, hath acceded to the treaty of alliance; that to furnish his quota, his troops are already embark'd, and that I have engag'd myself in his service.

Theaspe. Why will you raise obstacles before you know the conditions? 'Tis a thing I have set my heart upon, and I tell you 'tis what in honour you can comply with.

Per. My duty, my obligations, put me entirely in your disposal.

Theaspe. You promise then solemnly, faithfully—

Per. I do.

Theaspe. I have remark'd, *Periphas*, that you are prodigiously fond of the princess *Calista's* daughter.

Per. I fond of her, madam!

Theaspe. Nay, *Periphas*, are you not eternally at her ear?

Art. How I have seen that formidable hero, general *Ajax*, suffer upon your account!—Of all his rivals you are his eternal torment.—He reddens, sighs, and (as

much as is consistent with such a blustering soldier's valour) languishes whenever you are near her.

Theaspe. You may safely own your passion, *Periphas*, for I know you think her agreeable.

Art. Besides her being the fashionable beauty of the court (which is sufficient vanity to make all the young fellows follow her) you, of all mankind, in gratitude ought to like her. I know all of 'em envy the particular distinctions she shows you.

Theaspe. I am convinc'd of her merits; and your marrying her I know wou'd make you both happy.

Per. Let me perish, madam, if I ever once thought of it!

Theaspe. Your happiness you see hath been in my thoughts.—I take the settling this affair upon myself.

Per. How cou'd you, madam, imagine I had any views of this kind!—What, be a woman's follower with intention to marry her! Why, the very women themselves wou'd laugh at a man who had so vulgar a notion of gallantry, and knew so little of their inclinations.—The man never means it, and the woman never expects it; and for the most part they have every other view but marriage.

Theaspe. But I am serious, nephew, and insist upon your promise.

AIR XXXVIII. No sooner hath *Jonathan* leap'd
from the boat.

What are the jests that on marriage you quote?

All ignorant bachelors censure by rote;

Like critics you view it with envy or spleen,

You pry out its faults, but the good is o'erseen.

Per. 'Tis not in my power, madam; 'tis not in my inclinations.—A soldier can have but one inducement to marry (and the woman may have the same reason too), which is the opportunities of absence.

Theaspe. You know, nephew, you have promis'd.

Per. But suppose I am already engag'd.

Theaspe. That will be another merit to her.

Per. 'Tis impossible, madam.—In a day or two you know I am to set out for the campaign.

Theaspæ. A lady of her romantic spirit can have no objections to following the camp.

AIR XXXIX. Love's a dream of mighty pleasure.

*Soldier, think before you marry;
If your wife the camp attends,
You but a convenience carry,
For (perhaps) a hundred friends.
If at home she's left in sorrow,
Absence is convenient too;
Neighbours now and then may borrow
What is of no use to you.*

I indeed fear'd *Pyrrha* might have started some difficulties, but if you rightly consider the proposal, you can have none.

Per. What is the cause of the war we are now engaged in? Does not the fate of *Menelaus* stare me in the face?

Theaspæ. I will have no more of your trifling objections, *Periphas*; and as to your part, from this time, I will look upon the affair as happily concluded.—All that now remains to be done is with *Pyrrha*. I have left her to *Deidamia's* management; and without doubt her good offices must prevail, for you can never have a better advocate.—But shou'd the girl be perverse and obstinate!—'Tis impossible. For however her heart is already engag'd, no woman alive can resist the ambition of such an alliance.

[*Exeunt Theaspæ, and Artemona.*]

Per. Had I so little taste of liberty as to be inclin'd to marry, that girl is of so termagant spirit!—The bravest man must have the dread of an eternal domestic war.—In a tongue-combat woman is invincible, and the husband must come off with shame and infamy; for though he lives in perpetual noise and tumult, the poor man is only ridiculous to his neighbours.—How can we ever get rid of her?—*Hercules* conquered the seven-headed *Hydra*, but his wife was a venom'd shirt that stuck to him to the last.

Enter Ajax.

Ajax. This rencounter, *Periphas*, is as I wish'd.—The liberties you have taken—you know what I!

mean—when my honour is concern'd—an indignity, and all that!—'Tis not to be put up; and I must insist upon an explanation.—There is a particular affair, my lord—

Per. Your accosting me in this particular manner, lord *Ajax*, requires explanation.—For let me die, if I comprehend you!

Ajax. Death, my lord, I explain! I am not come here to be ask'd questions.—'Tis sufficient that I know the affront, and that you know I will have satisfaction.—So, now you are answer'd—

Per. I can't say, much to my satisfaction, my lord; for I can't so much as guess at your meaning.

Ajax. A man of honour, *Periphas*, is not to be trifled withal.

Per. But a man of honour, *Ajax*, is not obliged in courage to be unintelligible.

Ajax. I hate talking.—The tongue is a woman's weapon. Whenever I am affronted, by the gods, this sword is my only answer.

Per. 'Tis not, *Ajax*, that I decline the dispute, or wou'd upon any account deny you the pleasure of fighting; yet (if it is not too much condescension in a man of honour) before I fight I wou'd willingly know the provocation.

AIR XL. *Maggy Lawtber.*

Ajax. *What is all this idle chat?
Words are out of season.
Whether 'tis or this or that,
The sword shall do me reason.
Honour call'd me to the task;
No matter for explaining:
'Tis a fresh affront to ask
A man of honour's meaning.*

Be it as it will, *Periphas*; we have gone too far already to retract.—You know, I suppose, of my pretensions to a certain lady.—Now are you satisfied?

Per. If you had her, my lord, it had been much more to my satisfaction. I admire your courage.

Theaspe. The woman, *Periphas*, is the only thing that can reconcile me to your behaviour.

Per. That blundering hero *Ajax* will have it that I am his rival. The man will be almost as miserable without her as 'tis probable he might be with her.—Oblige us both then, madam, and let the general be miserable in his own way.

Theaspe. I cou'd not have imagin'd that obstinate girl cou'd have had any scruples to the match; but *Deidamia* tells me she finds her as difficult as you.

Per. Since you know, madam, that *Pyrrha* will have her own way; for both our sakes, and to save yourself unnecessary trouble, your majesty had better give up this impossibility.

Enter Diphilus and Guards.

Diph. To prevent future mischief, my lord, his majesty puts you under arrest, and commands you to attend him. General *Ajax* is already in custody.—'Tis his pleasure too, that (after you have paid your duty to him) you embark with the troops immediately; and you are not to come ashore again upon pain of his majesty's displeasure.

AIR XLIII.

Per. *In war we've nought but death to fear,
How gracious is the sentence!
For that is easier far to bear,
Than marriage with repentance.
Begirt with foes, by numbers brav'd,
I'd bless the happy crisis;
The man from greater danger sav'd,
The lesser ones despises.*

Your majesty then, you find, must dispense with my promise 'till after the expedition.—If the general shou'd be so happy, to bring *Pyrrha* with him to the camp, perhaps we may like one another better.

Diph. The king, madam, wants to talk to your majesty upon affairs of consequence.—You will find him in the royal apartment.

Theaspe. My daughter, with *Pyrrha*, have just turn'd the walk, and are coming this way.—You may stay with 'em, *Artemona*, till I send for you.

[Exeunt Theaspe, Periphas, &c.]

Enter Philoe and Lesbía.

Phil. 'Tis horridly mortifying that these trades-people will never get any thing new against a birth-day. They are all so abominably stupid, that a woman of fancy cannot possibly have the opportunity of shewing her genius.

Lesbia. The fatigue one hath of talking to those creatures for at least a month before a birth-day, is insupportable; for you know, sister, when the time draws so very near, a woman can think of nothing else.

Phil. After all, sister, though their things are detestable, one must make choice of something or other. I have sent to the fellows to be with me this morning.

Lesbia. You are so eternally sending for 'em, one wou'd imagine you was delighted with their conversation. For those hideous stuffs they will shew us from year to year are frightful, are shocking. How can a woman have so ill a taste as to expose herself in a last year's pattern!

Phil. Dear madam, I beg your pardon. Let me die, if I saw you! [To Artem.]

Lesbia. Our meeting her was lucky beyond expression, for I never felt so uneasy a thing as a secret.

Phil. You know, sister, we had agreed to trust her with our suspicions.

Lesbia. Yet after all, when a sister's reputation is concern'd.

Phil. But is not the honour of a family of greater consequence?

Lesbia. Tho' she is a woman and a favourite, I dare say, if *Artemona* promises, whatever she suffers she will inviolably keep it to herself.

Art. If I had not this quality, I had little deserv'd *Theaspe's* friendship—By all that's sacred, ladies, you may safely trust me.

Phil. 'Tis impossible, sister, but she herself must have observ'd it.

Lesbia. Whatever people have observ'd, 'tis a thing, you know, that no creature alive can presume to talk upon.

Phil. Deal fairly and openly with us, *Artemona*.—

Lesbia. But if those foreign merchants who lately came into port are among 'em—

Phil. There, sister, is all my hope. I shall be horridly disappointed if they don't shew us something charming.

Lesbia. Shou'd any woman alive get sight of their things before us—

Phil. I cou'd not bear it.—To appear in what another woman had refus'd, wou'd make the creature so intolerably vain!

Lesbia. Are those merchants, I ask you, among 'em?

Serv. They have been waiting, madam, above this half hour.

Lesbia. And did not you know our impatience?—How cou'd you be so stupid!—Let us see them this instant.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Enter Ulysses and Diomedes, disguis'd as merchants.

Art. Unless you have any thing that is absolutely new and very uncommon, you will give us and yourselves, gentlemen, but unnecessary trouble.

Ulys. Our experience, madam, must have profited very little by the honour of dealing with ladies, if we cou'd imagine they cou'd possibly be pleas'd twice with the same thing.

Diom. You might as well offer 'em the same lover.

Ulys. We have learnt the good manners, madam, to distinguish our customers.—To produce any thing that had ever been seen before, wou'd be a downright insult upon the genius of a lady of quality.

Diom. Novelty is the very spirit of dress.

Lesbia. Let me die, if the fellows don't talk charmingly!

Phil. Sensibly, sister.

Lesbia. 'Tis evident they must have had dealings with ladies of condition.

Diom. We only wait your commands.

Ulys. We have things of all kinds, ladies.

Phil. Of all kinds!—Now that is just what I wanted to see.

Lesbia. Are not these, sister, most delightful creatures?

Ulyf. We know a lady can never fix unless we first cloy her curiosity.

Diom. And if variety can please, we have every thing that fancy can wish.

AIR XLVI. The bob-tail lads.

In dress and love by like desires

Is woman's heart perplex't ;

The man and the gown she one day admires,

She wishes to change the next.

The more you are fickle, we're more employ'd,

And love hath more customers too ;

For men are as fickle, and soon are cloy'd,

Unless they have something new.

Lesbia. But, dear man, consider our impatience.

Ulyf. Wou'd you command the things, ladies, to be brought here, or wou'd you see 'em in your own apartment ?

Phil. How intolerably these fellows love talking !

Lesbia. How canst thou, man, ask such a question !

Phil. Here——immediately.

Ulyf. Nay, 'tis not, madam, that our goods can be put out of countenance by the most glaring light—as for that matter—

Lesbia. Nay, pr'ythee, fellow, have done.

[*Diomedes goes out, and returns with Agyrtes.*]

Ulyf. I wou'd not offer you these pearls, ladies, if the world cou'd produce such another pair.

Phil. A pair, fellow—Dost thou think that jewels pair like men and women, because they were never made to agree ?

Diom. Now, ladies, here is all that art can shew you.—Open the packet.

Lesbia. This very individual pattern, in a blue pink, had been infinitely charming.

Phil. Don't you think it pretty, *Deidamia* ?

Lesbia. For heaven's sake, lady *Pyrrba*.—Nay, dear child, how can any creature have so little curiosity !

Ulyf. Look upon it again, madam.—Never was so delightful a mixture !

Diom. So soft ! so mellow !

Ulyf. So advantageous for the complexion !

Lefbia. I can't bear it, man; the colour is frightful.

Phil. I hate our own tame home-bred fancy.—I own I like the design—but take it away, man.

Art. There must be something pretty in every thing that is foreign. [*Ulyſſes ſhews another piece.*]

Deid. I am ſure, madam, this muſt convince you to the contrary.—Never was any thing ſo deteſtable!

Lefbia. For heaven's ſake, ſir, open that other packet; and take away this hideous trumpery.

Ulyſ. How could'ſt thou make this miſtake?—Never was ſuch an eternal blunderer. [*Opens the armour.*]

Phil. How ridiculous is this accident!

Diom. Pardon the miſtake, ladies.

Lefbia. A ſuit of armour!—You ſee, *Philoe*, they can at leaſt equip us for the camp.

Phil. Nay, *Lefbia*, for that matter it might ſerve many a ſtiff awkward creature that we ſee every day in the drawing-room; for their dreſs is every way as abſurd and prepoſterous. [*Another packet open'd.*]

Ulyſ. If your expectations, ladies, are not now antiwer'd, let fancy own herſelf at a ſtand. 'Tis inimitable! 'Tis irrefiſtible!

[*As the ladies are employ'd in examining the ſuffs, Achilles is handling and poſing the armour, Ulyſſes obſerving him.*]

Ach. The workmanſhip is curious; and ſo juſtly mounted! This very ſword ſeems fitted to my hand.—The ſhield too is ſo little cumbersome; ſo very eaſy!—Was *Hector* here, the fate of *Troy* ſhou'd this inſtant be decided.—How my heart burns to meet him!

Ulyſ. [*Aſide to Diom.*] That intrepid air! That god-like look! It muſt be he! His nature, his diſpoſition ſhews him through the diſguiſe. [*To Achilles.*] Son of *Thetis*, I know thee, *Greece* demands thee, and now, *Achilles*, the houſe of *Priam* ſhakes.

Ach. But what are you, friend, who thus preſume to know me?

Ulyſ. You cannot be a ſtranger, ſir, to the name of *Ulyſſes*.

Ach. As I have long honour'd, I ſhall now endeavour, ſir, to emulate your fame.

Ulyſ. Know, ſir, *Diomedes*; he too is ambitious. to attend you, and partake your glory.

Diom. Come, *Agyrtes*; with him we carry conquest to the confederates.

[*Agyrtes takes a trumpet, which lay amongst the armour, and sounds.*

AIR XLVII. My dame hath a lame tame crane.

Ulys. *Thy fate then, O Troy, is decreed.*

Diom. *How I pant!*

Ach. *How I burn for the fight.*

Diom. *Hark, glory calls.*

Ach. *Now great Hector shall bleed.*

Agyr. *Fame shall our deeds requite.*

[As *Achilles* is going off, he turns and looks on *Deidamia*:

AIR XLVIII. *Geminiani's Minuet.*

Ach. *Beauty weeps.—Ah, why that languish?*

See she calls and bids me stay.

How can I leave her? my heart feels her anguish.

Hence, fame and glory. Love wins the day.

[He drops the sword and shield.

Trumpet sounds, and he takes 'em up again.

AIR My dame hath a lame, &c. as before, sung in four parts as a catch.

Ulys. *Thy fate then, O Troy, is decreed.*

Ach. *How I pant! How I burn for the fight!*

Diom. *Hark, glory calls: Now great Hector shall bleed.*

Agyr. *Fame shall our deeds requite.*

[As they are going; *Achilles* stops, with his eyes fix'd on *Deidamia*.

Art. For heaven's sake, ladies, support *Deidamia*.

Phil. Never was any thing so astonishing!

Lesbia. Run then, *Artemona*, and acquaint the king and queen with what hath happen'd. [*Exit Artemona.*

Phil. Ah sister, sister, the mystery then of that particular intimacy between you and *Pyrrha* is at last unravell'd.

Lesbia. Now if it had not been a man of this pro-

digious consequence, it had been the same thing.—
Sure never unguarded woman was so unaccountably
lucky!

Deid. Can you leave me, *Achilles*?—Can you?

Ulys. Consider your own glory, sir.

AIR XLIX. Gavotte of *Corelli*.

Ach.

Why this pain?

Love adieu,

Break thy chain,

Fame pursue.

Ab, false heart,

Can'st thou part?

Oaths and vows have bound me.

Fame cries, Go;

Love says, No.

Why d'ye thus confound me?

Deid. Think of my condition.—Save my honour.

Ulys. Think of the honour of *Greece*.

Deid. Think of your solemn oaths and promises.

Ulys. Nations depend upon you.—Victory, sir, calls
you hence.

Deid. Can you, *Achilles*, be perfidious?

Ulys. Can you lose your glory in the arms of a
woman?

Deid. Can you sacrifice the fame of your faithful
Deidamia?

AIR L. -The scheme.

Ach. O, what a conflict's in my breast!

Ulys. What, still in suspense? bid fame adieu.

Deid. See me with shame oppress:

I curse, yet I love thee too.

Ulys. Let not her sighs unman your heart.

Deid. Can you then go, and faith resign?

Ach. Shou'd I!—How can I part?

Deid. Your honour is link'd with mine.

*Enter Artemona, Lycomedes, Theaspe, Diphilus,
Periphas, and Ajax.*

Lycom. Hence, *Diphilus*; and presume no more to
come into my presence. 'Twas your paltry flattery

that made me ridiculous.—Such a genius can never be at a loss for employment, for I have found you qualified for the very meanest offices. [*Exit Diphilus.*]

Theaspe. My daughter, sir, I hope, hath put confidence in a man of honour.

Acb. My word, madam, is as sacred as the most religious ceremony.—Yet (though we are already solemnly betroth'd to each other) 'tis my request, madam, that before I leave the court the priest may confirm the marriage. [*Theaspe whispers Artemona, who goes out.*]

Theaspe. This might have prov'd a scurvy affair, *Deidamia*; for a woman can never depend upon a man's honour after she hath lost her own to him.

[*Achilles talks apart to Ulysses, Periphas, &c.*]

Lycom. You must own, madam, that 'twas your own jealousies that were the occasion of *Deidamia's* disgrace.

Theaspe. How can you have the assurance to name it? Does it not put you in mind of your own?—Let her marriage to *Achilles* make us forget every thing past.

Acb. As you was so furiously in love, lord *Ajax*, I hope I shall still retain your friendship.

Ajax. No joking. I beg you, young man.—But pry'thee, how came you here? and in a woman's dress too!—Your setting out, stripping, did not seem to promise much.

Acb. The adventure wou'd be too long to tell you.—I shall reserve the story for the camp.

[*Artemona returns, with the priest.*]

Art. The priest, sir, is ready.

Lycom. The ceremony waits you.

Acb. It shall be my study, *Lycomedes*, to deserve this alliance.

Lycom. May you be happy!

Theaspe. Let the priest then join your hands.

[*Achilles, Deidamia, Lycomedes, Theaspe, Lesbia, Philoe, Artemona, retire to the back part of the stage. The priest performs the ceremony.*]

Per. Our duel, *Ajax*, had made a much better figure if there had been a woman in the case.—But you know, like men of violent honour, we were

so very valiant that we did not know what we were fighting for.

Ajax. If you are too free with your wit, *Periphas*, perhaps we may know what we quarrel about.

Uly. What, testy *Ajax* ! Petticoats have led many a man into an error. How lucky was the discovery ! for had you found a real complying woman, you had irretrievably been married. — The presence of *Achilles* shall now animate the war.

AIR LI. The man that is drunk, &c.

Per. *Was ever a lover so happily freed !*

Ajax. *Try me no more ; and mention it never.*

Uly. *Suppose you had found her a woman indeed.*

Ajax. *Must I be teaz'd and worried for ever !*

Diom. *By conquest in battle we finish the strife ;*

Per. *But marriage had kept you in quarrels for life.*

Ajax. *Must you be fleeing ?*

Truce with your jeering.

Know that you wits oft' pay for your sneering.

Per. If you had been deceiv'd by a woman—'tis what we are all liable to.

Diom. But *Ajax* is a man of warm imagination.

Ajax. After this day let me hear no more of this ridiculous affair.

Per. Nay, for that matter, any man might have been deceiv'd ; for love, you know, is blind.

Ajax. With my sword I can answer any man. — I tell you, I hate joking.

[*Lycomedes, &c. come forwards.*]

Lycom. I have the common cause so much at heart, that I wou'd not, son, detain you from the siege.

AIR LII. There liv'd long ago in a country place.

Deid. *How short was my calm ! in a moment 'tis past ;*
Fresh sorrows arise, and my day is o'ercast.

But since 'tis decreed — Let me stifle this tear.

Be bold, yet be cautious ; my life is thy care ;

On thine it depends ; 'tis for thee that I fear.

Lycos. As both her country and your glory are concern'd, *Deidamia* must learn to bear your absence.— In the mean time, *Achilles*, she shall be our care.— As the marriage is confirm'd; let the dancers, who were preparing for th' approaching festival, celebrate the wedding.

Ajax. But hearkee, young fellow.— This is the old soldier's play; for we seldom leave quarters but the landlord's daughter is the better for us.— Hah!

[To *Achilles*.

D A N C E.

Ulys. We may for a while put on a feign'd character, but nature is so often unguarded that it will shew itself.— 'Tis to the armour we owe *Achilles*.

AIR LIII. Minuet of Corelli.

Single. *Nature breaks forth at the moment unguarded.*

Chorus. *Through all disguise she herself must betray.*

Single. *Heav'n with success bath our labours rewarded.*

Chorus. *Let's with Achilles our genius obey.*

AIR LIV. Saraband of Corelli.

Ulys. Thus when the cat had once all woman's graces;
Courtship, marriage, won her embraces:
Forth leapt a mouse; she, forgetting enjoyment,
Quits her fond spouse for her former employment.

C H O R U S.

Minuet of Corelli.

Nature breaks forth at a moment unguarded;


Through all disguise she herself must betray.

Heav'n with success bath our labours rewarded;

Let's with Achilles our genius obey.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS COMEDY, and the Rehearsal at Gotham were finished by Mr. GAY, and intended for the stage before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the DUKE of QUEENSBURY: His grace accordingly permitted them to the press, and they are here printed from the original in the author's own hand-writing.



Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Sir Thomas Willit.
Barter, *a merchant, uncle to sir Thomas.*
Lord Courtlove.
Pert,
Forward; } *visitors at lady Willit's.*
Flutter,
Trenchwell, *a farmer, tenant to sir Thomas.*
Humphrey, *butler to sir Thomas.*
Fibber, *porter to sir Thomas.*

WOMEN.

Lady Willit.
Lady Frankair, *sister to lord Courtlove.*
Lady Rampant.
Mrs. Buxom.
Mrs. Clackit.
Miss Sprightly, *niece to lady Willit.*
Miss Friendless, *cousin to lady Willit.*
Fetch, *lady Willit's woman.*

T H E

DISTRESS'D WIFE.

A C T I.

Sir THOMAS WILLIT, Mr. BARTER.

BARTER.

WHY did you bring her to town at all? Why did not you pack her off into the country three months ago?

Sir Tho. But to fall upon the sex in so severe a manner looks like pique. You old bachelors should not judge of *all* women by those you have convers'd with.

Bart. Had I been ever married, nephew, you might have suspected me of pique and prejudice. Consider too, that a looker-on very often sees the oversights of those that are engag'd in the game; and of all mankind, according to my observations, a husband sees the least of what his wife is doing.

Sir Tho. But there may be exceptions, sir.

Bart. I tell you, nephew, 'tis every husband's case. A wife hath a thousand ways of blinding you.—(Not to mention lying) What think you of flattery, fondness, and tears? Those are hood-winks that wives have ready upon every occasion.

Sir Tho. Perhaps I have not the strongest reasons to be an advocate for matrimony; yet, for our own sakes, we should conceal our wives infirmities; for, if family disputes were to be made public, of all states, the state of matrimony must be the most ridiculous.—I grant you, sir, I have been very credulous; and that

she hath teaz'd and flatter'd me too into ambition; and I *did* believe some great relations of her's were to procure me an employment; so that I must take part of the folly of bringing her to town upon myself.

Bart. And had you not a more profitable employment, than they *could* give you, in looking after your own affairs in the country?—Employments and titles are the shadows that you country gentlemen catch at, and knaves run away with your substance. Besides, nephew, you are whimsical, and have opinions of your own. Then too, you have a perverse uncourtly manner of speaking your mind. Never think of an employment without implicit political faith, and the other necessary qualifications.

Sir Tho. I have given up all views, and am fix'd and determin'd for the country.—Such another year's expence would irretrievably ruin me.

Bart. A man with *such* a wife is never fix'd, is never determin'd; he is the weather-cock, and she the wind that blows it.—Give me leave to doubt your resolutions, for I can believe nobody in the family but your wife, because she knows what she *will* do.

Sir Tho. Nay, sir, you may believe me; for debts, duns, and necessity, have ty'd me down to be so unhusband like, as to *make* my wife do a reasonable thing.

Bart. But when she (with fondness and tears) assures you, that matters are just upon a crisis, that a good employment will soon set all affairs to rights; you must be convinc'd she hath your interest at heart, and you cannot in gratitude refuse to accept of her good offices in town for a month or two longer.

Sir Tho. Spare me, sir; for I know and own my weakness in being led into this foolish scheme.

Bart. But are you sure that you *can* be so uncomplaisant, as to throw a lady into a condition of life that she is utterly unfit for? For you must have experienc'd she hath all the suitable extravagance becoming a court-lady.—Nay, you too (without an employment) have show'd yourself qualify'd for one, by running into luxuries you could not support.—Does she game as deep as ever?

Sir Tho. You know she does.

Bart. And can you be so unreasonable as to put her out of the way of so *innocent* an amusement?

Sir Tho. Why will you aggravate matters? I am but too sensible of 'em already.—But it is necessary to pay tradesmen's bills upon leaving the town, and my steward hath been so slack in his remittances, that I shall be obliged to take up another thousand.

Bart. To enable your wife to play with a freer spirit.

Sir Tho. The moment I have satisfied my creditors, I will remove her from the temptation; and nothing she can say shall make me alter my opinion.

Bart. Upon that condition, I will find a friend, who shall furnish you with the sum, for your own, and her extravagancies have drain'd *me* of all my ready money?—But is your wife prepar'd for this terrible change?

Sir Tho. If you mean, that she is convinc'd, that she hath consented to live in a regular way (a way that almost every woman detests and despises) that is a question I shall never ask her.—Though she is obstinate, I am as peremptory; so, without disputing a point I know she never will give up, the authority of a husband shall prevent all her objections. We shall have time enough for a reconciliation when we are settled in the country.

Bart. Since I find you have got the use of your reason again, I shall take the privilege of a friend, and tell you, it was high time, upon every account, to do as you have determined.—Your character, as well as fortune, suffers.

Sir Tho. I beg you to explain yourself.

Bart. Is there not a bargain and sale on foot of your niece *Sprightly*, to that formal pedant in politics, lord *Courtlove*? The whole town looks upon that treaty of marriage (as you call it) in no other light.

Sir Tho. She is a relation of my wife's, and 'tis an affair that I have never meddled with.

Bart. How can the thing possibly have any other appearance?—What are your pretensions to an employment?—What were you to give for it?—I know the common way of dealing hath been, for so much honour, or so much conscience; but there have been those too,

276 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

who have dealt for wives, daughters and nieces.—In short, no place is to be had without a valuable consideration some way or another.

Sir Tho. I know there have been proposals from lord *Courtlove*; but what is that to me?

Bart. The world (in things of this nature) will suppose a man and his wife agreed, though they know ten thousand instances to the contrary.—'Tis impossible for us to distinguish to whom the folly or indiscretion properly belongs, with that exactness you can do between yourselves; so that your wife's conduct, in this particular, must reflect upon you.

Sir Tho. That old beau is an arrant assembly-haunter.

Bart. But this is a serious affair.

Sir Tho. Not a young girl of any consequence can appear, but he is her profess'd follower; and they all coquet it with him only to turn him into ridicule.

Bart. That is not the case here. Indeed, nephew, your wife's behaviour is downright scandalous.

Enter lady Willit.

La. Willit. How can you be so provoking, sir *Thomas*? Was there no place in the house to bring your company into but my dressing-room?—Mr. *Barter*, your servant.—After all, this is intolerable, that one can never have a room to one's self.

Sir Tho. My uncle, madam, was desirous of paying his respects to you.

La. Willit. And why had not you brought him to my bed-side?

Bart. If your ladyship is out of humour — [*Going.*]

La. Willit. Pardon me, Mr. *Barter*; I was not speaking to you. But you must allow that (notwithstanding the privileges of a husband) a wife ought to be treated with common good manners.—That's all.

Sir Tho. Your objections then, madam, are to me, it seems.

La. Willit. Bless me, how can any creature alive be so captious? I vow, Mr. *Barter*, I look upon your visit as very obliging.—But when one is just out of

bed!—You might have been so civil, methinks, to have sent up to know if one saw company or not.

Sir *Tho.* Nay, prithee, child, don't make yourself ridiculous. How can you put yourself out of humour for such trifles?—I have sent for my uncle to advise with him about settling my affairs upon our leaving the town.—

La. *Willit.* How should he be judge of our affairs?

Sir *Tho.* I am judge of 'em, madam.—I wish you were so too.

La. *Willit.* I wish some people would not be so overfond of their own opinions.—'Tis astonishing a man can have so perverse a conduct, as to make it impossible for one to serve him.

Sir *Tho.* What do you mean, madam?

La. *Willit.* To speak plainer then, you are *not* a judge of your own affairs.—Sure you will allow *me* to know what I am doing.

Sir *Tho.* Then I must speak plainer too, madam, and acquaint you, that my circumstances oblige me to put an end to your negotiations, and that my resolutions are taken to retrieve, to look after, and support the estate I was born to.—The wildgoose chase is over.—Let the necessitous and sycophants haunt levees, and seek to sponge upon the public; 'tis a pursuit beneath a free-born country gentleman. So, madam, I will not be the occasion of one lie more, either from you or your friends, for I here cancel all court-promises; and frankly own, that I am ashamed of the part you have made me act.

La. *Willit.* I beg you, sir *Thomas*, don't speak so disagreeably loud.—My head akes, and you worry one to death.

Sir *Tho.* Have you call'd in all your tradesmen's bills?

La. *Willit.* One would think you had found those creatures forward and impertinent enough without my encouragement.

Sir *Tho.* But these are things, child, that must be settled.

La. *Willit.* Always upon this topic! A man with these vulgar scruples about him is his own eternal dun.—Was there ever a man, who grew to be of any

278 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

consequence, who did not run out?—Would you have credit, and not make use of it?—Now, Mr. *Barter*, is not this narrow way of thinking provoking?

Bart. You would not, madam, condescend to appeal to a merchant upon this subject.—We live on in the humdrum way of honesty and regularity: We think, we act, differently from people at your end of the town; and as it never yet was known, can it now be expected, that courtiers should ever stoop to regulate their conduct by ours?—As I am no judge, you must excuse me from giving my opinion.

La. Willit. I wish you had never given your opinion to somebody else; for my husband is never so unreasonable as after he hath conversed with you.—Would your wisdom advise him now, out of caprice, to abandon a very considerable thing, that is ready for his acceptance?

Sir Tho. You know my resolution, and I advise you to prepare for it.

La. Willit. And do you really think this language is even becoming a husband?—For heaven's sake have done.—You know I am out of order, and company kills me; so that I must beg to be excused.—A brute! [Exit.]

Bart. I never enter into a dispute with a woman; for every reason against her, only serves to make her the more obstinate in her own opinion.

Enter Fibber.

Fibber. Lord Courtlove, sir.

[Exit.]

Enter lord Courtlove.

Ld. Court. The business of the day will make the levee sooner than usual this morning: If you will give me leave, sir *Thomas*, I will have the honour of waiting upon you.—I hope I do not break in upon business.—Pray, who is this gentleman? May one talk before him?—You will pardon my caution.

Sir Tho. My uncle, my lord.

Ld. Court. Mr. *Barter*, your most obedient servant.—The honour of being known to you is what I have been long soliciting.—Are we to have the favour of your company?—Shall I have the honour of presenting you?

Bart. To whom, and where, my lord?

Ld. Court. Sir *Thomas* and I are going together to the levee.

Bart. My nephew may do what he pleases; I have neither business, nor any thing to ask; and I would not make myself seem a dependent, to swell any great man's vanity in Christendom.

Ld. Court. I beg your pardon, sir. You merchants have your own ways of thinking.—

Bart. And of speaking and acting too.—But you know, my lord, we are a particular race of people.

Ld. Court. Pray, sir *Thomas*, hath Mr. *Barter* been disoblige'd?—I think it would not be prudent to talk upon your affair before him.

Sir Tho. My uncle is perfectly well acquainted with every step I am taking, and I beg you to give him no suspicions of me.

Ld. Court. Believe me, sir *Thomas*, you have not a common promise; I would not have your impatience shew you look upon it as such.—Your want of confidence of late, I know, hath given some unjust jealousies, but all those may be got over.—And will you just now, by any little omissions, make your affair impracticable?—You are sensible all my small interest is engag'd to serve you: I have made a point of it, and the thing shall be done.

Sir Tho. And so you have answer'd for my attendance this morning.—I have business, my lord.

Ld. Court. At this particular time, sir, I know your absenting yourself must be taken notice of; and it would not easily be forgiven.—My zeal, sir, for your interest, was the occasion of this visit.

Sir Tho. Is attendance and homage then expected from me as a duty?—Am I number'd among the prostitute hirelings of power?—I hope my behaviour hath not made me appear to the world in the contemptible light I do to you and your friends. 'Tis high time, my lord, that my conduct should rectify your mistake.

Ld. Court. Without your further appearing in it, sir *Thomas*, I say the thing shall be done.—But at present I wave the discourse.—You must pardon me, sir, if I am somewhat solicitous about my own success.—Am I to be happy with Miss *Sprightly*? Did she listen to the last proposals I made to lady *Willit*?

Sir Tho. The girl never ask'd my advice ; but if your lordship asks it, I own I think the inequality of your age makes the thing ridiculous.

Ld. Court. The alliance, the fortune, I hope, is unexceptionable.

Sir Tho. 'Tis not, my lord, that I think your applications desperate ; for daughters, as well as fathers and mothers, set their hearts on nothing but title and fortune. As to love, daily examples shew you, they seldom wholly rely upon a husband.

Ld. Court. We are upon no secret, Mr. *Barter*.—You cannot be a stranger to my treaty of marriage with Miss *Sprightly*.

Bart. If the girl was not so great a fortune, methinks your lordship's love would appear somewhat more disinterested.

Sir Tho. I have quitted all my pretensions to an employment ; and, did your lordship weigh the affair rightly, you would give up your's to a wife.—An employment frequently runs you into every fashionable extravagance, luxury, and debt : does not a wife do the same ?—An employment influences your words and actions, even against reason and common sense : a wife hath done, and can do the same.—As I am resolved to do one reasonable thing myself, I advise your lordship to do another.—Keep your reason, keep your liberty, and think no more of my niece.

Ld. Court. She seems to wait only for your approbation.

Sir Tho. Excuse me, my lord.—If I know her ; she is not to be influenc'd, but by her own inclinations : What those are I could never find out ; perhaps they may be at present to a title ; after you have her, they may be to something else.—Were it in my power, I would not do your lordship so ill an office.

Ld. Court. I trust myself to your friendship.—I am sorry I cannot have the honour of your company where I am going ; when I return to pay my respects to the ladies, I hope to bring you proofs that my friendship was not merely profession. [Exit.

Bart. I find you have the use of your reason when your wife is not by ; consider yourself as a man, and

consider her as a woman, and you may have it then too.—You were born to freedom, and would you seek to make yourself a slave? you were born to fortune, and would you stoop to make yourself a beggar? For of all beggars, I look upon a minister's follower to be the meanest.

Sir Tho. I have still, sir, so much of the spirit of a true *Briton*, that I despise myself for the steps I have been led into.—'Tis true, I am one flesh with my wife, but my mind is my own; and you shall soon be convinc'd, that I have so reasonable a regard for her, that my own honour shall govern me, and not her capricious passions.

Bart. That you may not be disappointed of the sum upon this emergency, it shall be my immediate business to find out a person to supply you. I'll be with you again an hour or two before dinner.

Sir Tho. I shall ever own the obligation, and you will soon have the pleasure to see that your good offices were not thrown away. [Exit Barter.

Enter Humphrey.

Sir Tho. Well, *Humphrey*, what want you?

Humph. My lady, sir, hath order'd me to call upon the wine-merchant for six dozen more of champaign. Now the case is, Mr. *Botler* won't deliver a drop more without ready money.—Alack-a-day, sir! things are hugely alter'd from what they were in old sir *Thomas's* time.—But servants must see all, and say nothing.

Sir Tho. 'Tis no matter, *Humphrey*.—You may tell my wife, that I gave you orders to the contrary.

Humph. Well,—it is no wonder that your fine folk live so great, when they pay for nothing. —Now to my thinking, to squander more than a man hath, is not so reputable a thing as your people of quality seem to think.—Why now, an't like your honour, there's your taylor uses you like a dog.—My lady too, *me* thinks, had better play less and pay better.—But servants, they say, must see, and say nothing.—What, though it be the fashion, to my thinking, there is no such mighty matter of greatness in being bubbled by knaves, and spunging upon industry.—Now, for

282 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

my part, I can't find out where would be the lessening of a great man, though he should pay his debts.—Great folk have great privileges, that's certain—But, troth, I think 'tis e'en as creditable to be just and honest.

Sir Tho. I thank thee, *Humphrey*, for thy blunt reproof. I feel the shame of being in debt.—'Tis a life of dependance, and beneath a man of honour.

Humph. And they tell me too, that matters are going at a wild rate in the country yonder. Hath your honour spoke with your tenant *John Trenchwell*, who came to town last night?—But here he is himself, and he can better inform your honour.—He would very fain have seen your honour as soon as he came to town.

Enter Trenchwell.

Sir Tho. Farmer *Trenchwell*, I am glad to see you. *Bray*, what business brought you to town?

Trench. My business, sir *Thomas*, is merely upon your account. As I have always found you a kind landlord, I thought it my duty to serve you to the best of my power.

Sir Tho. What is that paper in your hand? Hath a life dropp'd, and do you want to renew?

Trench. That you might not look upon it as a private pique of mine, you will find there the hands of most of your creditable tenants.—Your steward *Survey*, sir, hath abused you.

Humph. Open his eyes, Master *Trenchwell*. Be a rogue never so rich and great, 'tis the part of an honest man to detect him.—Fear him not, farmer *Trenchwell*. A knave, before he is found out, is proud and insolent, but after he is found out, he is the meanest of cowards.—Speak out; speak plain. 'Tis what every servant of the family hath long thought of him.

Sir Tho. 'Tis a remonstrance I see against *Survey*, my steward.

Trench. He never had any thing to transact with any one tenant, but he had a private jobb of his own.—By what means, think you, hath he purchased all those fine tenements round you?—Only give your tenants a hearing, and you will not want proofs.

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 283

Sir Tho. I always took *Survey* to be an honest fellow.

Trench. And do you think so still?

Sir Tho. I don't know what to think.

Trench. Read on.—Only see how he hath acted since he was left to himself.

Humph. Well said, teach him to know a rogue from an honest man. 'Tis a lesson that country gentlemen almost always pay for learning.—Now he does not care to find him out, because it will give him the trouble of looking into his own affairs.—Then too, none of your high-born gentlemen ever care to own they have been imposed upon.

Sir Tho. The facts charg'd against him are very strong.

Trench. And very true.

Sir Tho. I have been very kind to the fellow.

Trench. Knavery, *sir Thomas*, is not confin'd to *London*. We are not so ignorant of the ways of the world. Pray, how think you stewards get richer than their masters?—Ah, dear *sir*—*they* know how to make the most of a place too.

Enter lady Willit.

La. Willit. How can you have your creatures in one's dressing-room?—You know I want to dress.—What business have you here?—Did not I order you to go to the wine-merchant?

Sir Tho. I shall give direction about it; child.—Here's my honest neighbour *Trenchwell* hath brought me a most flagrant information against *Survey*.

La. Willit. A gentleman would have a fine time on't to be influenc'd by a few discontented-peasants.

Sir Tho. But the thing, madam, must be enquired into.

La. Willit. How can any creature be so dull, so unentertaining, to be always pothering over his own affairs! Can you be so unlike a gentleman, to think your father left you an estate to look after it?—What are stewards for?

Sir Tho. To look after fools estates, till they leave 'em nothing to look after.

La. Willit. Short and pithy.—But why am I to be worried?—I am not your steward;—am I?—Do you

284 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

know that I am to have company to breakfast? —
Fetch, get my things ready to dress this instant.

[*Calls at the door.*]

Sir Tho. Since the company and discourse are disagreeable to you, we'll talk farther upon this affair below.

La. Willit. What is the wench stupid? — *Fetch* — No — let the disagreeable crew be gone first. — And let me know when every thing is ready. [*Exit.*]

Sir Tho. Where shall one look for honesty? — Who hath it? — Or of what use is it to the owner? — 'Tis a restraint upon a man's fortune; 'tis a curb upon opportunity, and makes either a public or private trust worth nothing. — What's its reward? — Poverty. — Is it among the rich? No: for it never keeps company with avarice, luxury and extravagance. — Is it among the vulgar? No: for they act by imitation. — Who can one trust? — If I trust my servant, I tempt him. — If I trust my friend, I lose him. — If I trust my wife, for the quiet of the family, she looks upon it as her duty to deceive me.

'Tis then ourselves who, by implicit trust,
 Tempt servants, friends, and wives to be unjust.



A C T II.

Lady WILLIT, FETCH.

Lady Willit sitting at her toilet.

Lady WILLIT.

BLESS me! — How can any mortal be so awkward [*Fetch combing her hair.*] — Dost think I have no feeling? — Am I to be flea'd alive? — Go — begone. [*going.*] — Come hither. [*returning.*] — Who do you think is to dress me? — Tell 'em I'll have the tea-kettle ready this instant. [*going.*] — Is the wench distracted? — What, am I to sit all day long with my hair

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 285

about my ears like a mermaid? [*returning.*]—Now I'll be sworn for't, thou hast not spoke for the tea-water all this while, though I order'd it an hour ago.

Fetch. Not by *me*, madam.

La. Willit. So you tell me I lye—that's all. [*going.*]—What is the blundering fool doing?—Am I to be dress'd to day or no? [*returning.*]—Bid the porter bring me up the book of visits.—Why don't you go? [*going.*]—Must I bid you do the same thing a thousand times over and over again?—I am to have no breakfast to day, that I find you are determin'd upon. [*stops at the door.*]

Fetch. Your ladyship bid me call the porter.

La. Willit. And where is he?—Thou hast not done any *one* thing that I have order'd thee all this day. [*going.*]—Bring me the lavender-drops. [*returning.*]—No, I won't have any now—you know I hate 'em—One would think the wench had learn'd from her master, and that I was born to be contradicted.—The visiting-book, I suppose, is to be a secret; and I am the last of the family who is to be trusted with it.—Go, get out of my sight, provoking slut. [*stops at the door.*]

Fetch. Your ladyship hares one so—so—so, that you will not give one ti—ti—me—to do a hundred things at once.

La. Willit. Don't stand there a pouting and blubbering.—Is the creature grown a changeling?—*Fetch, Fetch, Fetch*, come hither, I say. [*raises her voice every time she calls.*]—Well, madam, now I speak to you calmly. [*Fetch returns.*]—Will you be so obliging as to desire the porter to bring me the book of visits, as soon as he and you shall think convenient. [*going.*]—But first (d'ye hear me?) [*returns.*] bring me the cellar yonder. [*brings the box.*]—What am I to drink out of?—A tea-cup, fool.

Fetch. I hope your ladyship is well. [*brings the tea-cup.*]

La. Willit. Thou art so intolerably stupid, there's no enduring thee.—I have rav'd myself into the spleen—hold, hold. [*pours some cordial water into the tea-cup.*]

Fetch. What signifies that drop or two?—indeed, madam, your ladyship should take a little more.

La. Willit. There, there; enough.—One would think, girl, thou hadst a mind to fuddle me [*drinks.*]—So then you won't take it away again!—What art thou pothering about?—*Fetch*, how long is it since we came to town?

Fetch. The four months, madam, are out this week.

La. Willit. Well; methinks, it is but a day, an hour, a minute.—I am determin'd he shall not have his will in ev'ry thing.—I am *not* to be dangled about whenever and wherever his odious business calls him.—Well.—And where's the porter? [*Exit Fetch, lady Willit rises.*] Sure, nothing can be more shocking than knowing the day of one's death, except knowing the day one is to be buried in the country! There to be stuck, and to have a new suit every spring like a tree, for the benefit of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field; to be gaz'd at every *Sunday* at church by ploughmen and their cubs, and draw the envy of their wives and daughters!

Enter Fetch and Fibber.

La. Willit. Thou wilt always be a blundering fellow, *Fibber*. [*sits down.*]—Give me the book then. [*snatches the book out of his hand, and looks on it every now and then.*]—Wilt thou never learn to know any body? Every creature is let in you should keep out, and I am deny'd to every body you should let in.—I am not at home this morning—d'ye hear me?—I mean to no odd-body; to no formals—I'll see no-body whatever.—To me visits are now as troublesome as to a man under sentence. Hath your master, *Fibber*, given any orders about going into the country?

Fibber. The servants, madam, talk of this week.

La. Willit. Servants will always be talking impertinently.—I desire I may have no more of your blunders.—You may go. [*going.*]—But stay; [*returns.*] You know I always am at home to Mr. *Pert*. [*going.*]—Now, *Fetch*, pray tell me sincerely; who do you think the prettiest fellow of all my visitors?—*Fibber*,—Call

him back, and bid him wait without.—[*Fetch goes out and returns.*] Well,—Why don't you answer me?

[*Rises.*]

Fetch. Dear madam!

La. Willit. Nay, *Fetch*, you shall tell me.

Fetch. Why, madam, I own, (if I must speak truth) I think Mr. *Pert* is a charming man.

La. Willit. Now, *Fetch*, you say that to flatter me.

Fetch. Sure no creature alive was ever half so entertaining.—'Tis a pity he is so given to whisper.—

La. Willit. After all, a woman, as well as a minister, would lose half her importance without her whisperers.—They give one an air of consequence at an assembly.—I know the women hate me for it, for it makes the men appear too particular.

Fetch. Now I love a man that speaks out.

La. Willit. Well,—and what's the use of a whisper?—The fault of it, *Fetch*, is, that it is often too plain.

Fetch. Your ladyship should not betray his whispers.

La. Willit. How dare you?—I won't suffer you, *Fetch*, to be impertinent.—But why is not the porter here?—Would'st thou have me call him? [*Exit Fetch, and returns.*]

—For what was it I wanted him?—oh—

Enter Fibber.

If Mr. *Forward* calls, I think—Yes—You may let him in.—But no one living creature besides. [*going.*]—Held—Where is the stupid fellow going? [*returns.*]—And lord *Courtlowe* too.—No—'Tis no matter.—But be sure you let me know when he is with Miss *Sprightly*.

Fetch. Your ladyship hath forgot Mr. *Flutter*.

La. Willit. The fellow could not be such a block-head to deny me to him.—You know he is always admitted.

Fibber. And if lady *Frankair* calls—

La. Willit. How canst thou ask such a question! Have not I sent to her twice this morning? If she is not here in five minutes, order the footman to go again.—Now you know my commands.—But, be sure you let in no fusties. [*Exit Fibber.*] How happy is that creature!—Of all the women in the world I envy lady *Frankair*.

Fetch. Why so, madam?

La. Willit. She hath her will in every thing, be it ever so unreasonable.—Then too, she hath not (like most of our fine ladies) lost her reputation, I should say gain'd a reputation for nothing.—Besides, who lives more elegantly? Who dresses better? Who hath more command in her family? Who plays deeper and handfomer? Who hath the credit of more intrigues, and hath really had 'em? Half of the women in town have had nothing but the vanity of having lost their reputation.—Sure there was a time, when men and women had other pleasures besides vanity!—The flirting fellows now play at making love, as the children make believe gossipings and christenings. But, lady *Frankair*; sure, she hath more wit and more real pleasure!—Wou'd I were that very individual woman!

Fetch. But they say she runs her husband in debt most monstrously.

La. Willit. And would'st thou really, *Fetch*, have a woman deny herself the use of her husband's fortune? [*sits down.*] Thou talkest so like my husband, there's no bearing thee.—I have an aversion to any body that is so intolerably wise.—Why dost not thou talk to me too of œconomy?—I am surfeited with that hideous word.—Don't you know we have company to dinner, and that I am to be dress'd to-day?—Nay, prithee, wepch, don't lay violent hands upon me.—I won't dress yet.—See if the tea-things are ready.

Enter Fibber.

Fibber. Lady *Frankair*, madam.

La. Willit. Why did not you bid her come up, fool? [*rises.*]

[*Exit Fibber.*]

Enter lady Frankair.

La. Frank. Sure, child, you can never be so tame a domestic animal as to submit to dwell with birds and beasts! The town was built for rational creatures.—Pluck up the spirit of a woman of sense, and be obstinate.

La. Willit. How different is the state of marriage!—To you 'tis a convenience, to me 'tis a bridle; to you

'tis liberty, to me 'tis chains ; to you 'tis a-gallant, to me 'tis only a clog, a dog in the manger,—a husband.

La. *Frank*. All this is owing to your too easy complying temper. I dare say (as if he were another man) you now and then sit with him, converse with him, and have been unguarded enough to have been convinc'd by him.—Now that is what I can have no notion of.—'Tis such as you, child, that make husbands impertinent.—But, after all, why in these violent agonies?—The employment; that I know will be offer'd him, *must* keep him in town.—My brother *Courilove* tells me the thing is sure.—But pray, how are he and Miss *Sprightly* together at present?

La. *Willit*. Never were two such unaccountable creatures!—The thing may seem incredible, yet 'tis certain, the man absolutely will not accept of an employment, and the woman refuses a title.—In short, my dear, there are a thousand disagreeable circumstances, that concur to make my case desperate.

La. *Frank*. 'Tis not, child, that he hath any objections to an employment; 'tis the expectation, 'tis the delay, that hath disgusted him. A promise hath disobligh'd many a country gentleman; but the employment never fails to reconcile 'em again.

La. *Willit*. But there are other things too.—Could you imagine him still so little acquainted with good breeding as to be jealous?—There are creatures who can never get the better of their natural rufficity.—Besides, 'tis evident, I am beset with spies. He keeps that awkward cousin of his in the house for nothing else, who worries me with her company eternally; and though she leads the life of a dog, like a spaniel, she is the fonder of me for her ill usage. That girl, I suspect, hath been a devil to me.

La. *Frank*. I really think her pretty; then too, she seems a harmless, good sort of a creature: I dare swear she is inoffensive, that is to say, unobserving.

La. *Willit*. Hang her, I hate her.

La. *Frank*. But your business, my dear, at present is to gain time: you must contrive to defer the journey, or you are utterly lost.

La. *Willit*. What must be, must be.—'Tis merely

290 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

'possible the country may be agreeable to cows and asses; I hate meadows and trees.—The country air for health!—"Tis a lye.—'Tis plague, pestilence, and death.

La. *Frank*. Why can't you be sick?

La. *Willit*. To have the immediate sentence of banishment by the prescription of a physician.

La. *Frank*. But what think you of the spleen, vapours, fits?—Never fear, child, the physicians will keep such patients in town for their own sakes.—The spleen hath weakened many a husband's authority; the vapours have blown up many a dreadful resolution; and by well-tim'd fits I have known the most miserable slaves of wives grow to absolute dominion.

[Fetch enters; the tea-table brought in.]

La. *Willit*. Nay, I must and will try what can be done; for I had rather really *die* in town than *live* in the country; though I hate paradise, 'tis painted so monstrously like it. What is death but leaving the company one likes?—And is not one depriv'd of that in the country? Death is oblivion, 'tis a state of forgetfulness; but *there* we live and hear of pleasures that we are ever debarr'd from; and where's the difference of being buried in a church-yard, or an odious country-house? A restless, walking, dead thing, who is sensible she is dead and feels herself buried!

La. *Frank*. Only gain time, child, and you must gain your ends.

La. *Willit*. 'Twas the malicious penny-post letter, about me and Mr. *Pert*, that made him thus entirely untractable.—I will get to the bottom of it, I am determin'd—I know the girl hates me.—*Fetch*, go call my cousin *Jenny* to me this instant. [They sit down at the tea-table.] [Exit Fetch.]

Enter Miss Friendless, and Fetch.

La. *Willit*. Heavens! How like a mawkin the thing looks! Whence came you now?—From slopping of tea to be sure!—Miss *Sprightly* and you are always nuzzling your heads together.—I will have no pouting—don't stand biting your thumbs, but sit you down.—Now, *Jenny*, don't deny it; for I know that giggling

flirt and you are always turning the family into ridicule, that you are oblig'd to.

Friendl. How can your ladyship think me so ungrateful!—Let me entreat you, madam, to have a little consideration for me before company.

La. Frank. Are you for a cup of tea, Miss *Friendless*.

La. Willit. Don't trouble yourself, madam; the girl is so cramm'd already, that she can't guzzle down a drop more—You, that are an observer in the family, without doubt, must know all things.—Will lord *Courtlove* carry his point with Miss *Sprightly*?—Now I take *Jack Forward* to be her favourite.

La. Frank. Miss *Friendless*, your tea will be cold.

La. Willit. Dear madam, do you mean to drown the girl? I told you she had breakfasted already.—But, *Jenny*, why don't you answer me?—Don't be in your sullens.

Friendl. She trusts me with none of her secrets.

La. Willit. How monstrously this girl will lie!—There. [*She rises and turns her round, and then sits down, Friendless remains standing.*] Turn about and show yourself.—Now pray tell me, lady *Frankair*, is this creature fit to appear in civiliz'd company?

Friendl. How can you be so inhuman? [*Going.*]

La. Willit. Nay; you shan't stir.—Now, *Jenny*, let me ask you one question, and know that I will have an answer.—How frightfully the girl stares!—What letter was that, which put sir *Thomas* in such insufferable ill-humour yesterday? Come, own it fairly.—'Twas Miss *Sprightly* set you upon it.—That flirt would have a regiment of lovers. I have long observ'd she hath an eye to Mr. *Pert*, and she thinks I prevent his coquetting it with her.—Now is not this true, cousin *Jenny*?

Friendl. Your ladyship sure is not in earnest.

La. Willit. Let me have a direct answer; for know, I will be satisfied.

Friendl. You may believe me, madam.

La. Willit. But I won't believe you.—The thing shall be brought to light.—Now will I be hang'd if she hath not another letter in her pocket to carry on the

same mischief.—*Fetch*, turn out the creature's pocket.—I know I am your aversion.

Friendl. What a life am I born to ! chamber-maids, kitchen-maids, scullions are to be envy'd. I am tormented, like a boy's bird, merely for diversion.

La. Frank. Really, madam, you are now too severe.

La. Willit. Nay, madam, that is my business.—*Fetch*, do as I bid you, huffy.

Friendl. Ah !

La. Willit. Why does not the wench give it me ?—What a luggage is here !—Why dost not thou carry a knap-sack ?

Friendl. I beg it of you.—How can your ladyship expose one so !

La. Willit. What have we here ?—A tawdry purse of her own work. Couldst thou imagine this a thing that cou'd ever be of use in thy pocket !—Here ; take your dirty trumpery.—The top of a tooth-pick case, a bit of sealing-wax, and a huswife.—There ; why don't you take your trolloping things as I give them you ? A knotting-needle, a glass necklace, and a mother of pearl snuff-box.—So, now I see which way all my snuff goes.—There—pick 'em up when I bid you.

Friendl. 'Tis not to be borne.—I *will* have my pocket.

La. Willit. You will !—How ?—Am I to be insulted thus ?—Am I to be talk'd to in this manner ?—You *will* !—*Fetch*, keep the girl from me till I have done—You shall find, madam, that I have the command in my own house.—You grow so monstrously uneasy, that I fancy the secret is not far off.—This broken-clasp pocket-book may be worth perusal ; and this letter too, may make some discovery.—There, take all your nasty litter ; [*Flings her the pocket. They rise from the tea-table.*] it makes me sick ; there's no enduring it.—*To Mrs. Elizabeth Pantry.*—Pray, how long hath this correspondence been between you and my house-keeper ?

Friendl. Your ladyship cannot be so ill-bred as to break open one's letters.

La. Willit. That such a creature should talk of good-breeding ! [*breaks open the letter.*] Are you *now* convinc'd, lady *Frankair*, of the girl's impertinence ?—

[reads.] "Mrs. Pantry, As I promised to give you intelligence of our leaving *London*, that you might get things in order, I can now tell you, that I guess it will be the latter end of this week. Your friend and humble servant, *Jane Friendless*."—You are beast enough to be fond of the country, I find; and I am to be lugg'd thither to keep you company.—But the pocket-book may be of more consequence.—[reads] "For seeing the play with Mrs. *Fetch*, one shilling and sixpence. Lost at cribbage to Mrs. *Fetch*, two-pence halfpenny. For seeing the wax-work in *Fleet-street*, sixpence."—Nothing but a poultry account of her expences.—But what have we here? [reads] "A collection of the newest expressions in use among the fine gentlemen and ladies."—What can't thou mean by all this nonsense?—[reads.] "*Having an affair with a lady. Being well with a lady.*"—Expressions not fit for a modest pen to explain.—"*To follow a woman.*" That is, when a man takes all occasions to shew the town that he follows her."

Friendl. You tear me to pieces. Dear madam, have some mercy.

La. Willit. [Reads.] "*A dangler.* One that passes his time with the ladies; who says nothing, does nothing, means nothing, and whom nothing is meant to. It puts one in mind of Mr. *Flutter*."—Fool!—"A *flirt*. One who gives himself all the airs of making love in public; that is of vast consequence to himself, and to nobody besides.—*Something of Mr. Pert*."—ridiculous slut!—[reads] "*A fine man.*"—Just what I take Mr. *Pert* to be. A man who knows little, and pretends to every thing."—horridly ignorant!—[reads.] "*A pretty fellow*—that is, a fine dress'd man with little sense and a great deal of assurance.—"*Mr. Forward* is what one may call a pretty fellow."—Foolish beyond expression!—"The man is married;—that is, has an extravagant wife, is hen-peck'd and a cuckold, like—" [looking on lady Frankair.] The girl is horridly scurrilous.—"*Fusties, formals, and odd-bodies.*"—That is, her own, and her husband's relations."—The only just remark thou hast made!—Here, take

your impertinent book, get into your own room, and darn your tatter'd pinners,—flattern.

[*Exit Miss Friendless.*]

La. Frank. Supposing the girl innocent, your passion made you very provoking.

La. Willit. I can't endure any thing so intolerably forward.—Sure all the fine men have abandoned me to-day; they desert me as rats do a falling house; they have a presentiment of my disgrace, my ruin, my banishment.

La. Frank. That is the point you are to guard against. Don't insist upon too much; get but a reprieve, and with my instructions you shall carry every thing you wish.

La. Willit. Now is that creature gone to grunt out her grievances to Miss *Sprightly*.—But she shall not have that satisfaction.

La. Frank. Make *her* your single view. On the success of my brother *Courtlove's* affair, in short, depends your happiness or misery.

La. Willit. I know that malicious cousin of his, underhand opposes me in every thing.—Let us break in upon their conversation.

La. Frank. I am for *working* up the girl to the match.—Respect keeps a man from hurrying on an affair, which may be the very thing a woman wishes; now upon such an occasion, 'tis incredible how much we women can do with one another.—'Tis certain, my brother is extravagantly fond of her, for it is not to be supposed but he might have as good offers.

La. Willit. Your ladyship speaks my very sentiments.—Let us about it this moment.

La. Frank. Man knows us not; we trifle with their art: Woman can only judge of woman's heart.

A C T III.

Lady WILKIT, Lady FRANKAIR, Miss SPRIGHTLY.

SPRIGHTLY.

BUT after all, lady *Frankair*, the match would be ridiculous; you must think lord *Courtlove* too old.

La. Frank. What can you mean, child? I am proposing him for a husband, and you are thinking of a lover. Now those, in my opinion, require very different qualifications.

La. Willit. You should consider, niece, he is a man of quality.

Spright. I should consider too, that many a woman hath paid too dear for a title.

La. Willit. But then his estate—

Spright. No doubt is sufficient to keep more women than one.—No woman can be so unreasonable, as to expect my lord should live beneath his quality.

La. Willit. Besides all this, his employment—

Spright. That is one of the strongest temptations to a man to give up himself, I grant you; but women have other temptations that are more prevalent.

La. Willit. What temptations but these can induce a woman to marry?—I always thought the girl wanted discretion; but now, child, you have convinc'd me you know nothing of the world.

Spright. And you really would persuade me to make myself an old child's rattle, one that will be every day more and more a child, one that can never grow to a man!—Pardon me, madam, I had forgot he was your ladyship's brother!—but, however, you know that can't make him younger, and I speak only of my lord's age.

La. Frank. Miss *Sprightly* hath so many lovers, that she doth not care to determine on one for fear of losing all the rest.—Now is not that the case, miss?—Believe me, child, after marriage all the rest will double their application.

La. Willit. You have then so little consideration for your own happiness, that you would venture on a young fellow.—Now, lady *Frankair*, is it not surprising that girls can have so little judgment?—Suppose that Mr. *Pert* really was in earnest.—Nay, don't colour, niece, for I know he hath sent you verses.

Spright. What then?—That is, not that he admires me, but that I may admire him.—That's but a pump, madam; I know where his passion lies, though I think his most prevalent one is his own dear self.

La. Willit. Nay, now, child, you are piqu'd.—But perhaps I may be mistaken, for *Jack Forward* is perpetually flirting it with you.

Spright. Ever talking, and ever saying nothing.—There is more entertainment in the chattering of a monkey, because one may imagine that creature means something.

La. Willit. Yet you seem to listen, niece, to what you now give yourself such violent airs of despising.—Perhaps after all, *Flutter* is the man.

Spright. I do seem to listen, I grant you.—But does not your ladyship think there is a pleasure in hearing fools expose themselves?—Some women listen for one reason, and some for another.

La. Willit. Though every woman thinks she hath it, 'tis evident a true taste for men is very uncommon. Look ye, niece, I have consider'd your happiness more than your inexperience can possibly consider it; and I must own to you, that lord *Courtlove* hath had my consent.

La. Frank. All miss *Sprightly's* objections seem to arise from her particular notions of that family convenience, a husband. Look round, miss, among the husbands that you converse with, and then tell me, by what you see, what 'tis you expect.

La. Willit. 'Tis morally impossible, child, you can think of love and a husband together.—You are past sixteen; and 'tis high time for you to have the views of a reasonable woman.

La. Frank. Would you seek to put yourself in the power of one man; take a young husband; would you have many men in your own power, chuse an old one.

La. Willit. Are not a jointure and pin-money security for every husband's good behaviour?

La. Frank. Are they not the pledges, the insurance of our liberty and independence?

La. Willit. What can a woman wish for more?—Is not every pleasure included, child, in the having your own will?

La. Frank. You seem to have no notion of the real pleasures of a woman.—I am convince'd, miss, you read romances.

La. Willit. Were you, like me, to lose three parts of your life in a detestable country house, it might be a frightful proposal.

La. Frank. But to have for life the opportunity of masquerades, assemblies, operas, plays, parks, and drawing-rooms!

La. Willit. How can such a woman be ever unhappy!—Let me die, girl, if I don't envy you.

La. Frank. As lord Courtlove is my brother, whatever I say may be thought partial.

La. Willit. The flirting with young fellows is conversing with them in their own way; they mean nothing else; but lord Courtlove's address is of the last consequence. Now don't be ridiculous, child; I hope you will think yourself oblig'd to me.—But here he comes.—Lord Courtlove, your servant.

Enter Lord Courtlove.

Ld. Court. Ladies, your most humble servant.

Spright. No whispering, I beg you.—

Ld. Court. Though 'tis look'd upon as ill-manners, it is always excusable in a lover.

Spright. Your lordship's proposals are no secret; and why should we make believe love, when you are only talking of marriage?—Lady Frankair, and lady Willit, have been instructing me in the duty of a wife.—But are we really in earnest about this affair, my lord?—Nay I *must* own they have set the thing in an agreeable light enough on one side.—But—'tis astonishing to me, how a man with so much wisdom about him, can take it into his head to marry!—My good aunt here tells me, she hath promis'd for

me; perhaps, 'tis because she knows that no woman knows her own mind, or in this case, can answer for herself.—Take care, my lord, what you offer; should I take you at your word, I know you are a man of honour, whatever may be the consequence.

La. Willit. I now, niece, for your sake, will look upon the affair as concluded.

La. Frank. There may be some things they would not chuse to talk over before company.

[*Exeunt Lady Willit and Lady Frankair.*]

Ld. Court. Lady *Willit*, madam, hath promis'd that this day she will deliver happiness into my possession.

Spright. Then lady *Willit*, my lord, hath promis'd she does not know what: for, as I take it, your happiness will depend more upon me than her; and no woman knows what a wife she shall make any more than she knows what she shall be in t'other world; perhaps an angel, perhaps a fury.—Look ye, my lord, you may venture if you please;—all I can promise is to be a wife as the world goes.—Now you know what you have to trust to.

Ld. Court. Could I but obtain your consent.—

Spright. What signifies my consent?—After marriage I can act without your consent, as you act without mine before.—That's a most enormous perriwig, my lord; o'my conscience 'twould load an ass, and cover head, ears and all.

Ld. Court. You ramble from the question, madam.

Spright. Look ye, my lord, I tell you before-hand, I won't be grave; it is so like dullness, I hate it.

Ld. Court. If candour, benevolence, and affability can cement affections, our mutual happiness will know no period.

Spright. And are candour, benevolence, and affability all that I am to expect?

Ld. Court. Inclusive of the just duties of conjugal affection.

Spright. Your lordship speaks with so much solemnity, and so much deliberation, that your thoughts seem to be run away, and your words, I fear, will never overtake 'em.

Ld. Court. While I feel the satirical strokes of your wit, I admire it.

Spright. I am glad you like it, for 'tis what I can't help,—and you must expect.—An owl! an afs!—Sure all grave animals are ridiculous—but man. Really, my lord, whenever I see you in this solemn wise way, I shall think of a grave animal; and I must laugh, whatever be the consequence.

Ld. Court. Shall I never have the favour of a serious answer? How can I leave my heart in so undetermin'd, so precarious a state!—This, madam, is a day of public importance too; and I think it hard, that the care of kingdoms should call me from what I value more.—Though it is a particular ministerial point, and I have given my word and honour; if possible, I will get my attendance dispens'd withal. Think, madam, how I shall suffer with impatience. [Exit.

Enter Forward.

Forw. What, in the name of love, can you mean, madam? Marriage would infallibly turn the jest upon yourself: The whole town have given you to lord *Courtlove*. To make a man so perfectly happy without the least prospect of a return, is the utmost pitch of generosity.—Now I (who know the men you have in your power) have a better opinion of your judgment.—Think of the consequence of *such* an husband.—To wed, to sleep;—no more!

Spright. Am I to be terrified with *Shakespear*? Let *Shakespear* then thus answer you.

“Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,

“It seems to me most strange women should fear;

“Since marriage is a necessary ill,

“And will come when it will come.”

Why, *Forward*, you have not the least idea of love; who can mention that and judgment together. Love and judgment! they are things, *Forward*, that are incompatible.

Forw. Only think on *me*, madam.—*You* are witness of my love; and no creature alive can dispute my judgment.

Spright. Yes, I dispute it; or why this contemptible opinion of *me*? For I am not that credulous foolish

thing, to imagine you ever meant to marry me.—All the fine ladies in town would tear my eyes out.—You belong to the sex, and 'twould be inhuman to rob 'em of so innocent an amusement.

Forw. Innocent!—That such a charge should ever light upon me!—Wou'd (for some lady's quiet, who shall be nameless) that all husbands were of your opinion.—Yet, perhaps, I may have this infamous character, and it may be owing to my secrecy and discretion.

Spright. Suppose, now, I should pin you down to your proposal.—Poor lady *Frankair*!

Forw. The town is malicious.—Gallantry, nothing but gallantry.

Spright. But lady *Rampant*.

Forw. Unfortunate, silly woman!—I have left her off these three weeks.

Spright. The widow *Buxom* too.

Forw. Sure the women themselves must have a vanity in telling it!—Where the devil got you your intelligence?

Spright. And the forlorn, disconsolate, *Mrs. Clackit*.

Forw. Defend me from her!—She is of so forward a constitution, that her reputation was sing'd at fifteen.—Was the girl ever such an idiot to think I meant to marry her?

Spright. I am not that idiot, *Forward*.—Some women are to be ruin'd one way, and some another; but 'tis not every woman's good fortune to be ruined by marriage.—How can your fine women be so unconscionable!—Nay, there's my aunt too, lady *Willit*, would never forgive me.—I know this visit was meant to her; so I shall not have the vanity to take it to myself.

Forw. You know, miss *Sprightly*, where she is particularly; but I take it to be more owing to *Fetch's* insinuation than her inclinations; for that *Pert* is a most egregious coxcomb; he hath just capacity enough to corrupt a chamber-maid.

Spright. You are now, *Forward*, giving proofs of your secrecy and discretion; for you know 'tis not safe to trust one of the family.

Forw. No, faith, madam, I am in earnest.—Not that I think his success so sure neither.—For by this

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.. 361

time (for some reasons I know) I believe sir *Thomas* smoaks their intimacy.

Spright. For some reasons!

Forw. I mean, madam, the affair is grown so very public.—But what's all this to the purpose? I come, madam, to save you.—Only imagine yourself married to your old fellow. He *may* be jealous; he *must* be inconvenient; for husbands will every now and then be thrusting themselves into their wives parties of pleasure.

Spright. These are terrors we must risque; but woman's resolution gets the better of them all. — Now, *Jack Forward*, don't take this to yourself. — Between one fool's vanity, and another's resentment, a woman's reputation is in prodigious safe hands among you fine gentlemen.

Forw. What do you mean, madam?

Spright. Did not you say just now that *Pert* was a coxcomb? 'Tis plain you converse with the ladies, for the finest woman alive could not treat a friend more familiarly.—But should my aunt surprise us together, her jealous temper would conclude I don't know what.
—So, Mr. *Forward*, your servant. [Exit.

Enter Fetch, Flutter, Pert.

Fetch. My lady, sir, is in the utmost confusion, that any business should make you wait;—in two or three minutes she'll be at liberty.—Now don't go, Mr. *Forward*, I know she'll take it mortally ill.—Mr. *Flutter*, your servant.—Mr. *Pert*! I *must* own I am always glad to see you, though I blush to tell you so.—Were not you very impudent last night?—How could you have the assurance to make me such a proposal?—But then, how can I have the assurance to remember it?

Forw. You must always be particular.—Why may not we too share the pleasure of Mrs. *Fetch*'s conversation?

Fetch. You must excuse me, gentlemen, for I dare not stay;—my lady will be with you immediately.

[Exit.

Flutter. Most certainly she must be at prayers; for that is the only thing the fine women are now ashamed to do before us.

304 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Fetch. Don't be rude then —The minute you grow uncivil, depend upon it I'll leave you.

Pert. 'Tis in vain, child; I will have it so.—You shall sit down by me.

Fetch. I tell you I won't.—Should I be caught (*sits down*) in this familiar way, what is there people might not think of me?—And so you must know, you have made a most dreadful quarrel in the family.—That impudent letter you sent to dissuade me from going into the country, set me in such a flutter, that in the hurry and confusion I only burnt the cover, and sir *Thomas* found the letter; and his jealousy imagines it was sent to his wife.—Now you know, be the consequences never so terrible, I dare not tell the truth, and take it upon myself.—We may set out for the country to-night for ought I know.—Every thing hath that appearance.

Pert. Well, my dear, what's all this to us?—*Now* is your time to resolve then.

Fetch. What! to be a whore!—[*Rises*] I am not that credulous fool you take me for.

Pert. You mistake the thing, child.—I have more regard for your reputation, and I never propos'd but to keep you.

Fetch. Keep me! impertinence.

Pert. Why not? Marriage of late is grown to that prodigious expence, that few estates can support it.—Pr'ythee, child, how do you think that young gentlemen of small fortunes dispose of themselves?—'Tis become quite reputable. You see 'em admitted every where.—Then where can lie your objection?

Fetch. I wonder how I can have the impudence to listen to you.

Pert. Only look upon that paper.

Fetch. I look upon your odious papers!

Pert. A hundred, and for life.

Fetch. I tell you I won't be ruin'd.

Pert. 'Tis a settlement, child. Do not all women, even in marriage, look upon that as the most material part of the ceremony.

Fetch. So you won't be answered!

Pert. Let us sign and seal.

Fetch. Let me die if ever I see your face again!

Pert. A hundred, and for life.

Fetch. A whore! faugh.—Because you are a pretty man, you think you may say any thing. Let me go.

Pert. For life! look upon it, read it.

Fetch. Insinuating monster! you know I like you, and that makes you give yourself these liberties.—I tell you again, I *won't*.—What would you have me say to you?

Pert. You are determin'd then, like your lady, to lose your life in the country, in marriage and penitence.

Fetch. If any man could prevail—But what am I saying?—I *won't*.—Dear Mr. *Pert*, don't insist upon it.—I *won't*.—My reputation!

Pert. What dost thou mean, child, by reputation? Why should you frighten yourself with such unfashionable scruples?—If you were a wife, you could not be so ungenteel as once to think of it; and 'tis really silly to make those distinctions between before marriage and after.

Fetch. I am afraid to trust my words with my thoughts.—I don't know what to say.

Pert. You will then.

Fetch. Sure the only security of any woman's virtue is to keep it out of temptation! [Sighs.]

Pert. Well then, my dear, the affair is fix'd.

Fetch. I was not so impudent to consent, was I?—I have *not* given my word, Mr. *Pert*.—But if you are resolv'd to ruin me—My lady rings, and I must leave you this moment.—Nay dear, dear Mr. *Pert*, I won't be kiss'd.—But am I to take that paper with me?

Pert. Hold, child, things of this nature like marriage must be done in form. Every thing shall be ready when next we meet.—Think my dear what I have saved you from.—Had you gone into the country with these scruples about you, you must have dy'd a maid, or at least have been married.—How many married women will now envy you!

How sweet, though short, would be the nuptial life!
If 'twas no longer love, no longer wife.

ACT IV.

Lady WILLIT, FETCH.

Lady WILLIT.

WELL!—And what is become of all the men?—
Did not I charge you not to let 'em go?

Fetch. Sir *Thomas*, madam——

La. Willit. Sir *Thomas*! always Sir *Thomas*!—I have
so much of him, that I am sick of the very name.—
For heaven's sake, talk of something more agreeable.—
—Can I never have any one thing done that I order?—
Are they gone, I ask you?

Fetch. Your husband then, madam——

La. Willit. Husband! hideous!—How *can* the wench
be so vulgar! Husband!—Didst thou ever hear that
word even in mix'd conversation that was commonly
well-bred; for who can tell but these may be married
women in company?—To my face too—What have I
done to be mortified in this brutal manner?

Fetch. Your ladyship ask'd me a question.—

La. Willit. And why don't you answer me?

Fetch. Sir *Thomas* then, madam, told 'em you were
indispos'd, and desir'd to be excus'd.

La. Willit. A savage!—You could have told him he
w'd.—

Fetch. There are familiarities that might become
your ladyship.—

La. Willit. Impertinence! don't talk to me. It
kills me to think of his behaviour.—I'm sick to death
of him.—[*Flings herself on the couch.*] The salts—
Where are they?—Where have you mislaid the bottle,
monster?—What is the blund'ring fool looking for?—
I know you saw I had it in my hand, and thou would'st
not have the humanity all this while to tell me of it.
—So you won't then give me that play-book when I
bid you!—I'll read, and try to forget him.

Fetch. Your ladyship changes your mind so often,
that 'tis impossible for any servant alive to keep pace
with it.

La. Willit. You will talk then!

Fetch. When one does all one can to please you —

La. Willit. Hold your tongue, I say, and don't provoke me.—I hate this silly trash.—

[*Flings away the book.*]

Enter Fibber.

La. Willit. What does this fellow want? How dar'd you come into the room without being sent for?—Where's the blockhead going?—Well, what hast thou to say to me now?

Fibb. Miss *Clackit* presents her humble service to your ladyship, and hopes that you have not forgot that she is to go to the opera with your ladyship at night.—She'll call upon your ladyship at half an hour after five.

La. Willit. Say that I'm out of order; that I see no company;—say any thing.—Now, can that brute ever make me amends for the loss of an opera?

Fibb. Mrs. *Buxom*, madam, sent word, that she hath secur'd a box for the new play next week, and that there will be room for your ladyship, lady *Frankair*, and miss *Sprightly*.

La. Willit. What will become of me! I must and will keep my engagements.—Why did I ever know there was such a place as *London*?—Was there no body besides?

Fibb. Lady *Rampant* depends upon your ladyship to make up her quadrille party after the opera.

La. Willit. 'Tis intolerable, that one must set every agreeable thing aside for the impertinent business of a husband.—You may go.—But hast thou any thing else to say to me?

Fibb. Only the man left the masquerade tickets for your ladyship—Here they are, madam.

La. Willit. Blockhead! fool! [*Tears them to pieces.*] But why, I pray, were not these messages deliver'd me as they were sent?

Fibb. Your ladyship was with sir *Thomas*; and I had his positive orders to the contrary.

La. Willit. Get you out of my sight.—How dar'd you to think of obeying him in any thing that related to me? [*Exit Fibber.*] This cousin of his is a most hypocritical jade—I must and will unravel this affair.—

308 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Call her to me then.—[*Exit Fetch, and returns with Friendless.*] But now I think on't I'll stay till I have seen lady *Frankair*.—Have you any business with me, madam?

Friendl. Did not your ladyship send for me?

La. Willit. I send for you!—Don't flatter thyself, girl, I am not in such miserable distress for company.—You may go again. [*Exit Friendless.*]

La. Willit. How could you be such a blundering creature?—Did not I bid you call Miss *Sprightly*. [*Going*;

Fetch. Really, madam, you confound me. [*Return.*]

La. Willit. I won't be spoke to.—Where are you going?—[*Going.*] I won't see her now; I've chang'd my mind.

Fetch. If it be not an unreasonable request from a servant, I could wish your ladyship would know your own mind before you speak:—'Twould save you a great many words, and me a great deal of trouble.

La. Willit. I tell you, *Fetch*, I won't bear your insolence.—Go, see who 'tis that knocks.—If 'tis lady *Frankair*, that blund'ring fool of a porter may deny me.—I'll call when I want you. [*Exit Fetch.*]

Enter Lady Frankair.

La. Willit. If I had done any thing to make him jealous, it wou'd not vex me.

La. Frank. Hath he still the use of his reason? sure he must be more than man, or you less than woman!—What, let a man that loves you have his own way!—How can you answer it to the sex?

La. Willit. The creature fancies too he hath business.

La. Frank. And fancies you have pleasure.—Why cannot each of you follow your own amusement?—Did ever any man but a husband talk to a woman about business?—One wou'd imagine they did not know what we were made for.

Enter Fibber.

Fibb. Lord Courtlove, madam.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Lord Courtlove.

La. Willit. Is the affair settled? You must pardon me, my lord; for I am very impatient.

Ld. Court. The promise is renew'd, but the place is gone. What is a promise?—A civility, and nothing more; and yet greedy necessitous fools will depend upon it; they will flatter, they will lye, they will betray for it; they will run in debt upon it; they take it too as current coin, and, till their creditors fall upon 'em, they never find the mistake.—Excuse me, ladies, for I have lost all temper.

La. Willit. Then I am wretched.

La. Frank. You are a lost woman if you trust yourself in the country with him—We must defer it.

La. Willit. But how, how! that's the question, my dear lady *Frankair*.

La. Frank. Miss *Sprightly* must have my brother.—Nay, child, we must some way or other bring it about.

La. Willit. Wou'd I cou'd marry him!

La. Frank. I hope sir *Thomas* hath never seen you in this tame governable way.—Shou'd he imagine you had so much condescension in your constitution, there is no husband alive but wou'd take the advantage of it.—How many of 'em have I known spoil'd to all intents and purposes by our compliance to what they call reasonable things!—Now I can have no notion that a husband can propose a reasonable thing.

La. Willit. I am sorry your ladyship hath so mean an opinion of my understanding.—Sir *Thomas* may give himself what airs he pleases, but upon this head I have nothing to accuse myself.

La. Frank. Support the dignity of your character now or never.—Though you are his wife, determine to be always your own woman.

La. Willit. But who can hinder the creature from thrusting his advice upon one?—Had I ever taken it, I should not wonder at him.—But, dear lady *Frankair*, can you think of any scheme to save me, for I hate to be obstinate when there is no occasion for it?

La. Frank. Keep your temper, child; your case is not yet desperate.—Now wou'd not any one swear that man was really unhappy? So disconsolate, so sighing, and all for the loss of a woman!—Had he been a year or two married, he would have learnt to have borne a loss of this kind with more philosophical resigna-

Call her to me then.
 Friendless.] But r
 seen lady Franko
 madam?

Friendl. P.

La. Willit

girl, I ar

—You

La.

cre

as not told me, ca.
 as your husband in every thing
 that man our friend.

Willit. Never think of it.—Had it not been for
 that meddling fool, mine had never once thought of
 his debts, nor the family been in this confusion.

La. Frank. Yet there may be ways of softening him.

La. Willit. You don't know him.

La. Frank. Pardon me, madam.

La. Willit. 'Tis impossible.

La. Frank. Have not you observ'd, that he and I
 of late are very well together?—He makes up to me
 upon all occasions.—We only ask him, child, to speak
 and act contrary to his opinion; trifles that; my bro-
 ther knows, are every day got the better of in things
 of greater consequence.—What offers hath he refus'd?
 hath he ever been rightly apply'd to?

La. Willit. But then that cursed devil of a girl
 Friendless, is so set against me.

La. Frank. Now I really don't think the girl, in
 common justice to herself, should part with her interest
 in miss Sprightly for nothing.—My brother ought to
 have offer'd her some sort of civility. As the interest
 with our friends is a saleable commodity, pray, why
 should not she make the best of it too?

Ld. Court. Without doubt; it hath been a shame-
 ful omission.

La. Willit. Now is it not astonishing, madam, that
 that hideous girl should ever be of consequence enough
 to be brib'd?—'Tis ridiculous.

Ld. Court. That, madam, shall be my affair.

La. Frank. You are now, my dear, in the right way.

La. Willit. What a ling'ring death have you sav'd
 me from! Fetch, tell my cousin Jenny to come to me
 immediately—Lady Frankair and I, my lord, will
 leave you to manage that awkward creature—'Twould

THE DIST

ESS'D WIFE. 313

ad to think
esses.

Enter

two thinks the other the

so inconsiderable,
accepted it.

me to be his
ry justly makes
I inclin'd to

ing.

the sleeve to

child, of your own work

Friendl. Your ladyship's civility is drawing
that it puts me in confusion.—I am so un-ately.
with both of 'em, that 'tis hard for me to distinguish
one from t'other.

La. Willit. Now wou'd any body imagine by that
creature's looks, that she had so much mischief and
malice within her? [To lady Frankair.

Ld. Court. The distinctions miss Sprightly shows
you, are to me indisputable proofs of your merit.
[To Friendless.

La. Frank. I differ with you, madam:—Miss
Sprightly, in my opinion, does not want sense.

[To lady Willit.

La. Willit. And yet she seems to think love the
most reasonable motive to marriage.—Now is that like
a woman of common understanding?—The girl is un-
accountable.

La. Frank. Our last conversation must have had some
effect upon her.

La. Willit. Is miss Sprightly, cousin Jenny, in her
own room?

Friendl. I left her there, madam.

La. Willit. Let us set upon her once again; she is
the only woman I ever knew that another woman
could not find out; though we are such riddles to men,
we are not such mysterious things to one another.—
I leave you, cousin Jenny, to entertain lord Court-
love. [Exeunt lady Willit, and lady Frank.

Ld. Court. Those eyes! were not my heart already
engag'd, I must have lov'd now.

Friendl. I am unus'd to flattery, my lord; 'tis
throwa away upon me, for I have not yet learnt that
easy happy faith, to join with every flatterer in flatter-
ing myself.

Ld. Court. That modesty, madam, is too severe, which takes offence at truth. — You cannot be a stranger to my passion, who enjoy the intimacies of a conversation, which (though you deserve) I always envy. — Were your friendship to second my address to miss *Sprightly*, it could not possibly fail of success.

Friendl. Your lordship's ear perhaps is as little acquainted with truth as mine is with flattery; so that to one of your rank I cannot be so ill-bred, to speak it without permission. — Pardon me, then, my lord, if I am not of your opinion.

Ld. Court. I know you could do it, miss *Jenny*.

Friendl. I should deceive your lordship, if I did not dissuade you from this pursuit.

Ld. Court. Would she but let me know her objections.

Friendl. As in this case they generally depend upon fancy and caprice, a woman either can't give 'em, or won't give 'em.

Ld. Court. I know, miss, you have good-nature; I know too the credit you have with her. — Might I hope for your good offices, you should not find me ungrateful.

Friendl. What do you mean, my lord?

Ld. Court. Mean, madam! — I said I would not be ungrateful.

Friendl. Have I ever call'd your gratitude in question, my lord?

Ld. Court. I thought the courtly phrase of transacting business had been better understood.

Friendl. But why are you so mysterious?

Ld. Court. I mean then, madam, (you must pardon me) that the thing shall turn out to your own interest too.

Friendl. To my interest!

Ld. Court. A thousand guineas, or a diamond ring of that value.

Friendl. For what? — To sell my friend? Were I a man, you wou'd not have had the courage to have offer'd me this affront.

Ld. Court. Excuse me, madam; 'tis an affront that men of the greatest distinction pocket up without the least scruple.

Friendl. Is it because I want fortune you presume to

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 313

use me thus?—Which of us two thinks the other the most contemptible?

Ld. Court. The present is not so inconsiderable, but the richest person might have accepted it.

Friendl. A man who wou'd bribe me to be his friend (by tacitly calling me a knave) very justly makes me his enemy. Could I serve you, were I inclin'd to serve you, my honour would now forbid me.

Enter Fetch.

Fetch. My lady, and lady *Frankair* are in the drawing room, and desire your lordship's company immediately.

Ld. Court. I hope, miss, you will think more favourably of me, and not misinterpret a civility. [*Exit.*

Friendl. Is miss *Sprightly* alone, Mrs. *Fetch*?

Fetch. My lady bid me charge you not to stir from this room till she sent for you.—You had best not provoke her; for miss, yonder, hath put her most horribly out of humour.

Enter Miss Sprightly.

Spright. I have left my aunt like a woman distracted: she thinks me very unreasonable that I won't be married for her conveniency; now I think a woman runs a sufficient risque who marries for her own.

Friendl. Your lover hath been just now offering me proofs of his good opinion of you, and his ill opinion of me; for he would have brib'd handsomely for you.

Spright. I am sure, child, he must hold thy parts in prodigious contempt:—'Tis the great commerce of the world: for a man of rank or figure is above selling any thing—but his friend,—or himself.

Friendl. How can you divert yourself by being worried every day of your life?—Have you put an end to it at last by a peremptory answer?

Spright. My uncle, I find, holds his resolution of going into the country, and then there's an end of all his wife's schemes at once. 'Tis a sphere that stints the genius of an extravagant affected woman.—Inclination may be the same, but opportunities must be wanting; and she cannot have those frequent temptations of making herself and her husband so conspicuously ridiculous.

314 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Friendl. The want of fortune is felt so severely in no condition of life, as in being oblig'd to a proud imperious relation. While she is talking to me, I am in such awe, that my very reason is not my own.—In all places my circumstance must be the same.

Spright. You will always find a friend in me.

Friendl. Her very civilities are insults.

Spright. That lady *Frankair* hath been the poor woman's ruin.

Friendl. She affects her phrases.—

Spright. Her very vices, like an imitating poet.

Friendl. Then, without the common skill or views of a gamester, she plays immoderately.

Spright. And 'tis by that (if I mistake not) lady *Frankair* pays herself for her instructions.

Friendl. Now were I a man, I should be the most jealous of my wife's women-companions.

Spright. She is over-run with affectation; she is an awkward copy of that very woman, or rather of every woman of fashion.—Why does she paint? not that she wants a complexion, but because lady *Flarist* does it.—Why are all the fops in town admitted to her toilette? Because she hath seen 'em at lady *Frankair's*.—Why are common cheats and sharpers admitted among her visitors? Because she hath seen the particular civilities shown 'em at lady *Quadrille's*.—She is ashamed of going to church, because lady *Frankair* hath no religion.—Then too she wou'd fain have the reputation of making her husband a cuckold, in imitation of — a hundred of the fine ladies of her acquaintance.

Enter Fetch.

Fetch. Miss *Friendless*, my lady wants you this moment.

Spright. Nay, you shall not go, child; for, in the humour she is in, I know she wou'd use you like a dog.

Fetch. I dare not, madam, return without her.—'Tis well for us that her humours are divided among her husband and the whole family; for if they were to light upon one,—where's the patience that could bear 'em?

Spright. You know, *Fetch*, miss *Friendless* hath always had her full share of her.

Friendl. But, after all, miss *Sprightly*, I must go.

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 315

Enter Lady Willit and Lady Frankair.

La. Willit. I knew they were together.—You impertinent slut, why did not you bring me an answer? [*To Fetch.*]—Well, miss, and does your awkward privy counsellor there, applaud you for being so obstinately bent against your own interest? — [*To Sprightly.*]—Why is lord *Courtlove* thy aversion, girl? —Only because he is my friend.—Who hast thou in thy eye for her? [*To Friendless.*]—Depend upon it, that malicious creature intends to sell thee, child. [*To Sprightly.*]

Spright. Let me have the honour and shame of my own actions; for, like your ladyship, I am influenc'd by my own passions only. I am as much averse to advice as you can be: do all you can, you see I take my own.

La. Willit. Ah *Jenny, Jenny*, thou art a devil.

Friendl. You wrong me, madam.—But gratitude keeps me silent; I dare not trust myself with a reply.

La. Willit. That is to say, you cou'd be saucy if you wou'd.—Nay, I cannot be surpriz'd at the insolence of every one in the family, when my husband sets 'em an example.

Spright. Does your ladyship never accuse yourself as well as other people?

La. Willit. I don't want accusers, miss *Sprightly*: I think that matter is but too evident.—That sullen creature, [*pointing to Friendless*] lady *Frankair*, is a proof, that mischief is the only cunning of fools.—What does the fellow want?

Enter Humphrey.

Humph. My master, madam;—no offence I hope to your ladyship—

La. Willit. And didst thou think this a likely place to find him in?—These awkward country clowns think a man and his wife inseparable.

Humph. Nay, madam, I am not so fond of ill words, for that matter, as to seek to talk to you great ladies.—Then too, I have liv'd so long in a great family, that (as 'tis my duty) I leave my lady in the wrong whenever she pleases to be so; no offence I hope, madam.

[*Going.*]

316 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

La. Willit. This insufferable fool will eternally be talking.—Who wants your master?—That that creature's matter should be mine!—Why does not the fellow answer me?—Who wants him?

Humph. His uncle, madam, *Mr. Barter*.

La. Willit. My husband too out of the way! never was any thing so lucky.—Lay hold of this opportunity, my dear lady *Frankair*.—Tell *Mr. Barter*, that I desire the favour of his company. [*Exit Humphrey.*]
—Lady *Frankair* and I have business; so you two may go together and rail at me.—In a minute or two do you, *Fetch*, come and whisper me. [*Exeunt Miss Sprightly, Miss Friendless, and Fetch.*]

Enter Mr. Barter.

La. Willit. After I have given your ladyship a sufficient time to tempt him as a woman (don't think, lady *Frankair*; that I suspect your parts)—I'll send lord *Courtlove* to secure your conquest by what governs the world, Interest.—Love alone will never do! men think as coolly, and as reasonably, child, upon these affairs as we.—*Mr. Barter*, your servant.

La. Frank. Business takes a man off from his friends so immoderately, that one hath very seldom the pleasure of seeing you.—Now, dear *Mr. Barter*, tell me sincerely; don't you at some hours of the day, think of what is more entertaining?—I can have no notion that a reasonable creature (as you are) can entirely lose himself in the city; for you should never persuade me that such conversation can possibly be agreeable.

Bart. Why not agreeable? We have our affectations, our vanities, our follies, and our vices.—We rail, we are civil, and laugh at one another with the same familiarity and friendship as you do.—Then too, as you laugh at us, we laugh at you; so that we are never at a loss for something diverting and ridiculous.

[*Fetch enters and whispers.*]

La. Willit. You'll excuse me, madam.—I beg your pardon, *Mr. Barter*; 'Tis an affair that cannot detain me long. You see I use you both without ceremony.

[*Exit.*]

La. Frank. How cou'd you be so provoking, as not to be at my last assembly?—I hope you don't put me upon the foot of sending to you.

Bart. You know, madam, I had been at one before; and my curiosity was fully answer'd—Every body was talking round me, and not a creature had any thing to say;—not a man or woman but what was in the hurry of business, and not one of 'em had any thing to do; till at last I found all of them worn down, and dispirited with one another's impertinence, except a few friends who were seeking to ruin each other at the gaming-table.

La. Frank. But, dear Mr. *Barter*, how can you be so severe? 'Tis impossible to enter into the diversions of the place at once.—'Tis what one may call the exchange of love and gallantry; the transactions and bargains are settled in the crowd; but the business is concluded in a *tête à tête* at their own houses.—You may depend upon it, by its being so much frequented, that it answers the men's and women's ends some way or other.

Bart. But I have no schemes of that kind.

La. Frank. Why have you not?

Bart. At my time of life, madam, I shall not begin to make myself ridiculous.

La. Frank. At my time of life!—When did you ever hear a woman make use of that expression?—Are not you a man? beyond dispute you make yourself ten times as ridiculous by forgetting you are one.—Were you once settled among us; I see you have it about you to relish life.—A woman is a better judge in this case than you are of yourself.

Bart. I have not vanity enough to be work'd into a fool by flattery.

La. Frank. How can you take a thing so maliciously?

Bart. Really, madam, one would not chuse to be an awkward fool!—the genteel follies and vices never sit easy upon a man of business; the pretty fellows owe 'em entirely to education.

La. Frank. Let me die, Mr. *Barter*, if I am not serious in this affair! Suppose now, by my brother's marriage to miss *Sprightly* (which I know your advice cou'd easily bring about) our families were link'd in the same interest; and that your nephew, by a considerable employment, was oblig'd to reside in town,

imagine Mr. *Barter* had a mind to the girl himself.

Ld. Court. Nay, dear sister, keep your temper.

Bart. This whole proceeding, in the eye of the world, appears so very mercenary, so very corrupt, that your honour suffers.—Pardon my freedom, my lord.

Ld. Court. As to notional honour, you are undoubtedly in the right of it; but what is that to the practice of mankind?—

Bart. 'Tis you, my lord, and such as you that influence the manners of mankind.—Common charity obliges those of your rank to show clear and conspicuous proofs of honour and disinterestedness; for when ever you are mean and mercenary, the vulgar are hang'd for following your example.

La. Frank. Now is not this astonishing, brother, that an arrant citizen should pretend to censure the behaviour of a man of quality?

Ld. Court. Common sense, alike in all men, can distinguish honour and infamy.—

Bart. When I speak in defence of probity and honour, I mean to show my respect to your lordship; and in that light I hope the freedoms I have taken will need no apology.

La. Frank. The creature begins to be intolerably ill-bred. Let us leave him.

Ld. Court. The resolution I have taken will convince you, that I think myself oblig'd to you. [*To Barter.*]

La. Frank. Lady *Willis* expects us.—Sir, your servant.

Bart. This conversation I find hath detain'd us both too long.—I wish I may have time to prepare the account before my nephew's return.

Ld. Court. When you are at leisure, I beg you wou'd give me leave to communicate my thoughts to you.—How unlike is an honest man to a flatterer!

Mr. Barter, your most obedient— [*Exeunt Lord Courtlove and Lady Frankair.*]

Bart. Honour alone supports a noble name;
Without it, title but sets off the shame.

A C T V.

*Lady WILLIT, FRIENDLESS.**Lady WILLIT.*

YOU know, cousin *Jenny*, I have always been extremely kind to you.—Had there been a yard more of this lace I shou'd have made it up for my own wearing, the lappits are somewhat scrimp, 'tis true, but 'tis entirely new, and prodigious fine; and yet, girl, I can no more make thee grateful than I can make thee genteel.

Friendl. I can never forget my obligations.

La. Willit. Wilt thou never learn to live easy in a family? Is it not monstrous, to be so solicitous about pleasing my husband? Is there a woman in the world that cou'd forgive thee?—Recollect your behaviour, and you must own I have been too good to you.

Friendl. Might I be allow'd to vindicate myself.—

La. Willit. Nay, dear *Jenny*, you know I know you.—For thy own sake and mine don't talk.—I don't remember I gave you that fan. [*Takes her fan.*]

Friendl. Mr. *Barter*, madam, gave it to me—

La. Willit. As a reward for the meritorious mischief thou hast done me—Here, take it, girl; by my treatment of late, 'tis plain thou hast richly deserv'd it.

Friendl. If I ever offended you, it was by unseasonable sincerity and truth.

La. Willit. Sincerity and truth! I am surfeited with the hypocritical cant.—My husband is eternally stunning me with these two hideous expressions, as an excuse for his insolence and ill-manners.—I talk to you now, cousin *Jenny*, as a friend.

Friendl. Your ladyship will always find me such.

La. Willit. Tell me truly then (for you *are* in the secrets of the family) why is my husband grown more a brute than ever of late?

Friendl. I really think he loves you.

La. Willit. Suppose he does; art thou really fool enough to think *that* a motive to reconcile me to his brutal behaviour?—The love of a husband, girl, is not of that *prodigious* consequence.

322 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Friendl. The importunity of creditors in town, the frauds of his steward in the country must have made him uneasy.

La. Willit. Don't be impertinent, *Jenny*.—How dare you think of the affairs of the family?—Answer the question I ask you.—Why am I thus outrageously insulted? Who hath set him against me?—That devilish letter, *Jenny*.

Friendl. Miss *Sprightly* told me, that *Forward* did as good as own it, and that 'twas writ in pique and envy to *Pert*.—The occasion of jealousies is always to be avoided; for be the suspicion either true or false, the mischief is the same; and what hath now happen'd must convince you, that the vanity of fools hath embroil'd more families than real intrigues.

La. Willit. Thou art grown most affectedly wise, *Jenny*.

Friendl. That daily flutter at your toilette may be only innocent amusement to you, but it may gall the heart of a husband.

La. Willit. 'Tis then the company I keep, that gives you and him the offence—How intolerably like my husband the girl talks!—Dost thou think, child, that I was married to deny myself the common liberties of a married woman?—Would'st thou have a man and his wife so disagreeably malicious, as to be eternally intruding themselves into each other's company?—Ah, *Jenny, Jenny!* 'tis now a clear point who is his abettor: 'tis you that set him on.—Impertinence!—Get you out of my sight.

Enter Sir Thomas Willit.

Sir Tho. Nay, dear child, why are these unreasonable passions?

La. Willit. Unreasonable passions!—You know, sir *Thomas*, I have had my unreasonable provocations.—Do you imagine that nobody hath the talent of saying or doing a shocking thing but yourself?

Sir Tho. You need not go, cousin *Jenny*.

La. Willit. Go, I say.

Sir Tho. Dear child, keep your temper.

La. Willit. I won't.—Hear her, believe her, and make me and yourself unhappy.—I shall not interrupt the conversation.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Tho. Get yourself ready, cousin *Jenny*, to set out for the country upon the first notice; for the moment I take my resolution, nothing upon earth shall defer it.—But stay, child.—The present uneasiness of the family can be no secret to you.

Friendl. Wou'd it were in my power to remedy it.

Sir Tho. I am not so morose, to deny a wife the natural caprice and coquetry of the sex.—But of late her conduct hath been insupportable.

Friendl. 'Tis the way of the world that offends you.—Her behaviour is owing to imitation, more than inclination.—Are not all the ladies of her acquaintance so many precedents for every thing she says or does?—There is a fashion in conversation, in amusements, in follies, in vices, as well as in drefs.

Sir Tho. This detestable town is more infectious than the plague: a woman lives not one day in it without catching some fashionable vice or other.

Friendl. Were men to judge by appearances, the whole town wou'd be over-run with jealousy; for a woman is ashamed to seem to love her husband.—I am not vindicating the manners of the sex, yet I am an advocate for her innocence.

Sir Tho. Innocence!—Such innocence hath every bad consequence of guilt.—I don't know what to think of her.

Friendl. Consider, sir, the fashionable hypocrisy of the age is to appear vicious.

Sir Tho. This is the first time I ever suspected you for her confidant.—But, as a woman, 'tis natural to think a husband must be in the wrong when he is jealous.

Friendl. I speak in justice to her, and in duty and sincerity to you.

Sir Tho. Whatsoever they say behind one another's backs, to deceive a husband, one woman will vindicate another.—But it may be the girl's real opinion; she is credulous, and good-natur'd.—I have business now.—You may go, child. [Exit Friendless.

Enter Barter.

Bart. Were we to remove into another room, we should be less liable to be interrupted.—You see I have not forgot the offence I committed in the morning.

324 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Sir Tho. I have no notion of these ceremonies and punctilios between man and wife.—Sit down, fir; we will not be interrupted.

Bart. Your debts turn out greater than you imagin'd. These receipts have exhausted the whole sum.—Mrs. *Glib*, the lace-woman's bill, of a year and a half's standing (which was not in your list) amounts to a hundred and fifteen pounds.—Here's a bill too of Mr. *Gloss*, the mercer, of eighty three; and this of Mrs. *Spangle*, the embroiderer, of thirty-seven. I have order'd 'em to call upon me to-morrow, and, if you are satisfied in their demands, I will discharge the debt, and place it to account.—You see, nephew, I am willing to do every thing in my power to forward the reasonable, the honest resolution you have taken.

Sir Tho. 'Tis not enough that a man means to be just, when by his negligence, indolence, or vanity in living beyond his fortune, he puts it out of his own power to be so.—You are not supplying a squanderer, but retrieving a family: that is the obligation I shall have to you.

Enter Fibber.

Fibb. Your honour's letters, fir, by the post. [*Exit.*]

Sir Tho. The seal is quite broken, and not so much as botch'd up again.—The curiosity or fears of mankind are prodigious.

Bart. 'Tis a grievance that is become so general, that no particular will take it upon him to complain.

Sir Tho. “Madam”——The letter I find is directed to my wife.—How could the fellow be such a blunderer!—This is a liberty I never allow'd myself; but as 'tis my steward's hand, and can be no secret, you will excuse me.

[*Reads.*] “Madam, your ladyship must protect me from the information of *Trenchwell*, or the money I have advanc'd to you from time to time must all be brought to account.”——

To what will not a woman condescend to gratify her extravagance!

[*Sitting thoughtfully.*]

Bart. No ill news, I hope.

Sir Tho. 'Tis not her fault; 'tis my own negligence.——

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 325

—"In short, madam, my affairs are in such confusion, that unless I receive a satisfactory letter from your ladyship the very next post, I shall be oblig'd to make the best of my way to *Calais*."

SURVEY.

—Read it, sir.—Know me before you trust me. [*Barter reads.*]—Well!—Now I am to be trusted?

Bart. The more you want a friend, the more ready I am to serve you.

Sir Tho. An hour may be of the utmost consequence.—I have taken my resolution.

Bart. There are people of your's below, that stay for me. [*Exit.*]

Enter Humphrey.

Sir Tho. Humphrey,—let the coach and six be got ready with all the expedition possible.

Humph. Before the servants have din'd, sir!

Sir Tho. I don't dine in town.

Humph. Now I cou'd not help satisfying you, if you did not know where I was going.—But servants must not ask questions.

Sir Tho. Saddle-horses too for the servants.—D'ye hear?

Humph. Yes, sir.

Sir Tho. Let 'em be ready, and in the way, for I shall not stay a minute for any one of 'em.—But hold, *Humphrey*—Tell my wife I wou'd speak with her immediately—Go then.

Humph. Methinks, that you might be sure you knew your own mind rightly, you had better see my lady first.—Or, what hath been, may be; and we may, mayhap, have every thing to undo again. [*Exit.*]

Enter Lady Willit.

Sir Tho. Dear child, I am glad you are come.—I had just sent to desire to speak to you.

La. Willit. And what disagreeable thing have you to say to me?—If it is about business, let me intreat you, dear sir *Thomas*, to keep it yourself; for I won't be plagu'd and worried every hour of my life with such impertinent trifles.

Sir Tho. As I am settling accounts with my creditors—

326 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

1 La. *Willit*. You know I hate accounts.—What have I to do with your creditors? wou'd you have me pay 'em?

Sir *Tho*. Do you know any thing of these bills, child?

La. *Willit*. To-morrow morning,—a week hence,—some time or other, when I have nothing else to do,—if I don't forget it,—I will ask you for 'em.

Sir *Tho*. I only want to be satisfied if any thing hath been paid.—Some of the people themselves are below.

La. *Willit*. If you like to be entertain'd with their impertinence, send for 'em up.—Whether they or you dun me, the thing is much the same.—But after all, what wou'd you have me do?—Give me your hideous papers then. *Sarah Glib*—never was any thing like the impudence of that woman! she had the assurance t'other day to ask me for her money; a creature who takes such intolerable liberties, by my consent shou'd never be paid.—*Gloss* and *Spangle* too!—Once a week ever since we came to town have these odious names been laid upon my toilette.—Send the creatures away, I beg you; people of fashion should not encourage 'em, and (for the quiet of one another) shou'd never comply with a dun.—Was it upon this important affair I was sent for? [*Flings down the bills.*]

Sir *Tho*. Nay; stay, child.

La. *Willit*. I hate you when you are in this provoking wife way.

Sir *Tho*. I have something of consequence to acquaint you with.

La. *Willit*. I han't time to hear it now.

Sir *Tho*. But I must speak with you.

La. *Willit*. Speak then.

Sir *Tho*. I have order'd the coach and fix to be at the door as soon as it can be got ready.

La. *Willit*. The coach and fix!

Sir *Tho*. To set out for the country immediately.

La. *Willit*. Immediately!

Sir *Tho*. The very moment the coach is ready.

La. *Willit*. You might have been so civil to have ask'd me if I wou'd have the horses kept in town.—Now, dear Sir *Thomas*, wou'd not a hir'd set have serv'd your purpose full as well?

Sir *Tho*. Take nothing with you but what is abso-

lutely necessary upon the road.—Every thing else, child, shall be sent after us.

La. Willit. Am I a necessary part of your baggage, that I am to be bundled up with you at an hour's warning?

Sir Tho. Our affairs, child, have made it absolutely necessary.

La. Willit. Well! and do I detain you?

Sir Tho. You know 'tis impossible for us to stay in town.

La. Willit. That a dun or two can put you so hideously out of humour!—Don't you almost every where see, that they are the everlasting retinue of a man of fortune?

Sir Tho. You must allow me to know my own affairs, madam.

La. Willit. And you must allow me to know my own mind—sir.

Sir Tho. My resolutions, madam, are taken; so send for your maid, and order your things, for the coach will be at the door in less than half an hour.

La. Willit. In less than half an hour!—My head akes most intolerably; and it kills me to talk. [*Sits down.*]

Sir Tho. The journey, the air, the exercise, child, will do you good.

La. Willit. To do me good was never a motive for your doing any thing.—I wonder how you can have the assurance to give that for a reason. Your usage, sir, of late hath prepared me to bear your absence for ten or twelve days; and you can have no business that can keep you longer.—Therefore say no more about it, for I will not go.

Sir Tho. But, dear child, consider—

La. Willit. I won't.

Sir Tho. 'Tis impossible the family can subsist in town a day longer.—'Tis in vain to dispute; the thing must be done.

La. Willit. Must!

Sir Tho. Will you get yourself ready then?

La. Willit. No.

Sir Tho. Shall I call your maid to you?

La. Willit. No.

328 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

Sir *Tho.* Will you think reasonably?

La. *Willit.* No.

[*Sobbing and crying.*]

Sir *Tho.* This is not to be borne—Nay; pr'ythee, child, don't give way to these passions.—'Twill be to no purpose to act this part over and over again.—Wipe your eyes, my dear; and when a thing must be done, tho' it is a husband's proposal, do it cheerfully.

[*Takes her by the hand.*]

La. *Willit.* For heaven's sake, sir *Thomas*, let me alone.

Sir *Tho.* Answer me then.—

La. *Willit.* I won't be haul'd and worried.

Sir *Tho.* You or I, my dear, must get the better of these capricious humours.—[*Rings. Enter Humphrey.*] Tell *Fetcb* to come to your mistress.

Humpb. She's not in the house, sir.

Sir *Tho.* My cousin *Jenny* then. [*Exit Humphrey*] Speak to me, child.—These fits of unreasonable obstinacy are owing to my unreasonable compliance; and the low spirits you so often and so opportunely complain of, are owing to your too high spirits.—Leave off the fine lady, and be a reasonable woman.

La. *Willit.* Inhuman creature! ah—[*Screams;*

Enter Friendless.

Sir *Tho.* A glass of water and the hartshorn immediately, cousin *Jenny*.

Friendl. My lady is in her usual way, I see.

Sir *Tho.* But I am not in my usual way.—Leave her to me, child; and pack up those things that will be necessary upon the road.—The key, you see, is in the travelling-box.

Friendl. My lady will travel in her sultane, I suppose.

Sir *Tho.* In any thing—Nay, pr'ythee, child, get the better of yourself, and order what you would take with you.—What are you doing, cousin *Jenny*?

Friendl. This cordial-water box *must* go, for my lady never travels without it.

Sir *Tho.* Dispatch, girl, and ask no questions.

Friendl. And her toilette too—

Sir *Tho.* Only the things that are necessary.—Every thing else shall be sent after her. [*The cover of the box falls down.*]

La. *Willit*. How can you kill one with these intolerable noises? [Starts.

Sir *Tho.* Recover your reason, my dear; and give her directions yourself. [She rises.

La. *Willit*. How dar'd you touch any thing without my orders?—Lay every thing where you found it.—Audacious slut!

Sir *Tho.* Will you tell her then what you wou'd have done?

La. *Willit*. No.

Sir *Tho.* Pack it up then, cousin *Jenny*.

La. *Willit*. How!—did not you hear what I said?

Sir *Tho.* You must go as you are then; for nothing shall detain me—I have affairs with my brother below; so agree the matter between yourselves. [Exit.

La. *Willit*. Are these the proofs of your gratitude to me, for all the kind things I have done for you?

Enter *Fibber*.

Fib. Lady *Frankair*, and three or four ladies more, to wait upon your ladyship.

La. *Willit*. Get you gone, both of you. [Exit Friendless and *Fibber*.

Enter Lady *Frankair*, Lady *Rampant*, Mrs. *Buxom*, and Mrs. *Clackit*.

La. *Willit*. The brute hath really ruffled me.—[At the looking-glass.] I look horridly fluster'd.—To be got the better of by a husband!—Shou'd it ever be known, I shou'd be deserted by the men, and laugh'd at by the women.—Though I feel myself miserable, I won't make myself ridiculous. Lady *Frankair*, your servant.

La. *Frank*. What is the meaning of this sudden resolution?—If you go with him, child, you go to eternal banishment.

La. *Ramp*. Are you really leaving us, my dear?

Bux. I thought I had known you.

Clack. Are you mad, child?

La. *Ramp*. What a wretched hideous thing is a country-house!

Bux. 'Tis an everlasting tête à tête (without the chance of one agreeable interruption) and with whom?—with a husband.

La. *Willit*. Ah!

[Sighs.]

La. Ramp. That is a terrible circumstance.

La. Willit. But he hath real business, lady *Rampant*, and 'twas I prevail'd upon him.

Bux. A new opera next week, and lady *Willit* not at it!

Clack. 'Tis incredible!

La. Ramp. 'Tis impossible!

Bux. Nay, madam, 'tis for our interest that you never shou'd come to town; for we shall have all the fine men flirting at us again.

La. Willit. The loss of a new opera is a mortification.—Sir *Thomas*, indeed, wou'd have persuaded me to stay, but I know his affairs must suffer.

La. Ramp. You are grown most unaccountably considerate.

Clack. But, dear-child, what an odious journey are you taking?

Bux. Why fir *Thomas's* house is a thousand miles off.

La. Willit. 'Tis a dreadful way, that's certain. [*Sighs.*]

Clack. Now, I protest, I wou'd not marry a man that had a country-house.—I should be in perpetual apprehensions, when a husband had such a hideous mortifying thing in his power.

Bux. You will with——

La. Ramp. You will be moap'd.

Clack. You will despair.

La. Ramp. Could you bear to be a country gentlewoman, Mrs. *Clackit*?

Clack. Let me die, if I should not hang myself.

Bux. How many days journey is it?

La. Willit. Dear madam, don't name it.—But 'tis my own choice; and as my going, so my return depends intirely upon myself.

La. Ramp. How many women have been lost to all true pleasure, by trusting themselves with their husbands a hundred miles from *London*!

Clack. Believe me, child, 'tis a most terrible undertaking.

Bux. 'Tis like hell; 'tis easy to get thither.—But to return,—there's the point.

Clack. I advise you as a friend, my dear, let him do his business by himself, and don't trust yourself with him.

THE DISTRESS'D WIFE. 331

La. Willit. When I saw his affairs requir'd it, it was my duty to persuade him.

La. Ramp. The very sentiments of a notable country housewife!

Clack. When a man and woman are come to take each other's advice, they have done with the world, and the world hath done with them.—So, my dear, I wish you a good journey.— [Salutes her.

La. Ramp. I am afraid we incommode your ladyship. [Salutes her.

Bux. 'Tis a mortifying thing to part with you, my dear.—But I see you are in a hurry.— [Salutes her.

[*Exeunt* Clackit, Lady Rampant, and Buxom.

La. Frank. Really, child, you carried off your distress very handsomely.

Enter Fetch.

La. Willit. How dar'd you to be out of the way when I wanted you?

Fetch. Your ladyship's affairs call you into the country; and at present 'tis inconvenient to me.—

La. Willit. To you!—hold your tongue, impertinence.

Fetch. I have borne this usage but too long.—I was your servant, madam.

La. Willit. Have done, I say.

Fetch. Your ladyship may spare your anger for her that shall succeed me.—All I ask, madam, is my discharge.

La. Willit. There's no hearing it.—Don't talk to me.

Fetch. Your ladyship may treat your servants as you please; but as my circumstances are chang'd, your ladyship, methinks, might give me better language.

La. Willit. You will talk then!—Sir Thomas below, huffy, will pay you your wages.—Get you gone.

Fetch. Nay, madam, for that matter, unless your ladyship can behave yourself more civilly—I shall cut short the conversation.—Madam, your servant. [*Exit.*

Enter Sprightly, in her travelling habit.

Spright. Is not your ladyship ready yet?

La. Willit. Dear child, what do you mean?—You have never given lord Courtboue a positive answer.—

332 THE DISTRESS'D WIFE.

You may trifle with a lover too long.—I know you intend to have him. Such an offer!—You have too good sense to refuse it.

La. *Frank*. This is the only point, child, that can repite your sentence. [*To lady Willit. They seem in earnest conversation with Sprightly.*]

Enter Sir Thomas, and Friendless.

Friendl. The letter that gave you so much disquiet, *Petch* own'd to me was writ to her by *Pert*. As I have the happiness of your family at heart, I thought it my duty to let you know it.—'Tis upon his account she hath quitted your service.—The step she hath taken I own surprizes me; but there is not so sure a trap for a woman as a coxcomb.—A chambermaid is often the pursuit, when the lady loses her reputation.

Sir *Tho*. How happy have you made me by this discovery! [*To Friendless.*—I expect the coach at the door, child, every moment. [*To lady Willit.*]

La. *Willit*. And will you haul this girl out of town from so beneficial an offer? how can you ever answer it to her or yourself? can a day or two longer be of such consequence?

Spright. Put me out of the case, I beg you, my dear aunt. I long for the country; I dream of the country.—Wou'd I were there this instant.

La. *Willit*. How can you be so malicious?

Spright. The thing must soon discover itself; so I had as good own it.—My cousin *Harry*, just before he went to *Oxford*—'tis now above four months—

La. *Willit*. What of him, child?

Spright. Married me; that's all.—There are reasons too that would have hindered me from keeping the secret long; so, my sweet, kind aunt, you see there is a just impediment to this most honourable match of your proposal.—You may be surprized, you may be angry; I like him, I love him, and sure no woman alive was ever half so happy!—My friend here was witness to my happiness—Say what you will, you shall not put me out of humour, for the man is my own, and so is my fortune.

La. *Willit*. But after all, niece, your encouragement of lord *Courtlow* is not to be vindicated.

Spright. Your encouragement you mean.—The dear creature is now in the country ready to receive me. Wou'd I cou'd fly to h'm!—Now, if he is not as impatient as I am, I cou'd never forgive him.—But he is, he must be, and I believe him so.

Enter Lord Courtlove and Barter.

Ld. Court. Her person, her behaviour, her virtue, hath won me.—I shall not be embarrass'd with settlements, nor shall I be run out with extravagance.—I commit myself and fortune, sir, to your disposal.

Bar. As she hath a good understanding she must have gratitude.—Lord *Courtlove*, miss *Friendless*, offers himself to you for a husband.

La. Frank. Dear brother, don't make yourself ridiculous. [*Barter talks to Friendless.*]

La. Willit. 'Tis impossible he can be in earnest.

Ld. Court. Your whole conduct hath charin'd me.

Friendl. So generous an offer! and in my circumstance!

Bar. Is not to be refus'd.—I know he esteems you; and your happiness now depends upon your own behaviour.

Friendl. I have a dread of greatness, and never indulg'd a thought of ambition. Yet, considering I am taken from my present dependance, though I am thrown into an affluence of fortune, I must be less unhappy.

La. Willit. How unaccountably are women dispos'd of!—How insensible is that creature of her happiness!—Now, dear sir *Thomas*, we must stay to see cousin *Jenny* married.

Sir Tho. I beg you, child, press me no further.—[*To lady Willit.*] The necessity will excuse the trouble I give you,—I must leave this and every other thing to you. [*To Barter.*]

La. Frank. Your ladyship hath forgot the seventy-five pounds:—I shou'd not have ask'd you for it, if I had not a troublesome play-debt of my own upon my hands.

La. Willit. From you too, lady *Frankair*! this is a dun that is insupportable.—I hope your lordship will insist upon his staying.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the life of *Gines de Passamonte*, alias *Peter* (a treatise which *Cervantes* mentions with great encomiums) we have this second adventure of his *Puppet-show*: it is there recorded to have happened in the town which lived in perpetual broils with the braying aldermen. In the following piece I have related the story in a dramatic way: I have too taken the liberty to make it conformable to our own customs, and made *England* the scene of the farce: but (knowing the captiousness of guilt) to prevent particular persons from claiming general satire, I have chose to place the adventure in a fictitious country town, supposed to be remote from the great scenes of life. Whoever will be at the pains to compare it with the *Spanish*, will find that (excepting these particulars) I have, in every material circumstance, faithfully follow'd the original.



Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Braywell.
Cackle.
Sir Nathaniel Ninny.
Drone.
Slugg.
Sir Humphrey Humdrum.
Cudden.
Sir Headstrong Buffle.
Drawle.
Noddipole.
Pother.
Oaf.
Gosling.
Broach.
Peter.
Pickle.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Braywell.
Mrs. Cackle.
Lady Ninny.
Miss Drawle.
Lady Buffle.
Lady Humdrum.
Mrs. Cudden.
Mrs. Pother.
Miss Slugg.
Miss Noddipole.
Mrs. Drone.
Mrs. Broach.
Betty Broach.

SCENE, GOATHAM.

T H E

REHEARSAL at GOATHAM.

SCENE, *the great room of an inn, set out
for an assembly.*

Miss Betty Broach, Jack Oaf, Will. Gosling.

GOSLING.

MISS *Betty Broach* is in all her airs to-day.
Oaf. And rot me, if I don't think her as
well dress'd and as well-bred as any of your aldermen's
wives! Now, *Will. Gosling*, would not you rather have
her than any of them? pox take me if I would not.

Gosl. Miss *Betty* hath an eye, that's certain.

Oaf. Ay, Miss *Betty* hath an eye—and a lip——
[*Kisses her rudely.*]

Betty. How can you teaze and haul a body so! I
believe, Mr. *Oaf*, I value dress as little as any woman
in *England*; but do but see now, Mr. *Gosling*, how
frightfully he hath tumbled me, and when the corpo-
ration-feast is at our house to-day, and it falls out too
upon assembly-night, one would methinks appear a
little like a Christian.

Oaf. Kissing and anger apart then, miss *Betty*, I
came hither out of pure stark love and kindness to you
and your family.—Mr. *Broach* at present seems to be
in a good thriving way of business.

Betty. Bless us all, what's the matter?—

Goff. Nay, there is no harm done as yet.

Betty. To be sure my father hath been particularly oblig'd to Mr. *Gossling*, who will condescend to drink at our house, when his uncle *Cackle* keeps the *Swan* but down the next street.

Goff. But after all, miss *Betty*, how could Mr. *Broach* be so ill advis'd to let master *Peter* and his puppetshew into his house?

Oaf. It may seem a trifle, madam, but rot me, if the thing is not of consequence.—I know it will infallibly turn out to his ruin.—Faith and troth I am serious about it.

Betty. I don't understand you, Mr. *Oaf*. The shew is for the amusement and entertainment of the town, and in all likelihood it will rather promote custom than lessen it.

Oaf. You are out, miss *Betty*, most damnably out.

Goff. How comes it to pass that he chuses our town for his shew?

Betty. As he chuses any other, to get money if he can.

Goff. You make slight of this matter, miss *Betty*, I perceive.

Oaf. I must tell you then, miss *Betty*, that I know something of this fellow. The rascal is brib'd: Not that I think there is much in that, provided it were in a right cause; but the dog is brib'd against us. Brib'd to turn the whole corporation of *Goatham* into ridicule; this is matter of fact, miss *Betty*.—Now pray do you consider what will be the consequence of your father's harbouring the rascal?

Goff. Nothing alive but puppets would dare to be so insolent; for we see all well-bred men now-a-days pay the due homage to riches and power as they ought; and your father, beyond dispute, will be look'd upon to be the confederate of these impudent creatures. Remember what I tell you. I know he is brib'd, I know he is hir'd.

Betty. And pray who hath hir'd him? Whenever people are ridiculous, you need not purchase laughers; besides, whenever ridiculous people grow captious

and peevish, it only makes the laugh the stronger and more general. For do what we will, if some folks will have their follies and absurdities, there are others who will have their laugh. I ask you, sir, who hath hir'd him.

Oaf. So you vindicate him then, madam;—if you knew who had hir'd the fellow, without doubt you would that instant give him up. You know, miss *Betty*, the townsmen of *Afsborough* have, time out of mind, had an old grudge against our town—Now, who do you think hath set him upon us?

Goss. If you suffer the shew to be play'd, you may brew as good strong beer as you will——

Oaf. And you yourself, in all your airs, miss *Betty*, may sit in the bar all day long to lure in customers.—You will not draw one of the corporation into your house, that I can tell you.

Goss. Miss *Betty* is fond of a puppetshew, to be sure that's the case.

Betty. I own I am so fond of it, that I would not, because fools are captious, have the town lose its diversion.

Oaf. To suffer *Peter* to come into the town at all was not usage that I expected from the corporation. After the theatrical entertainments I have writ, and I may say without vanity, writ up to their tastes—I think the town ow'd me so much, as not to suffer any interlopers in a dramatic way.

Betty. But, dear Mr. *Oaf*, consider this is only a puppetshew. Sure you won't mention that and your own works at the same time.

Oaf. The town, you know, is capricious,—and one would not have it follow a low, dull, vulgar, spiteful, bitter, satirical thing. I am concern'd for the credit of our town, that's all. I wou'd have it encourage only things of taste; and in that view, I own, it would be a mighty mortifying thing to see this fellow draw an audience.

Goss. Without doubt it would vex a man.—If the shew takes.—After all, it would draw custom to the

house; and though I like *Betty Broach*, I would not have my uncle entirely lose all his business.

[*To Oaf aside.*]

Oaf. You see there's nothing to be done with her.—But yonder comes *Broach* and his wife.—Let me alone, you shall see how I'll work 'em.

Enter Mr. Broach, and Mrs. Broach.

Mr. Broach. I would have sworn, gentlemen, that I had left you drinking 'a bottle in the dining room with the corporation.—But I might indeed have known you were not among them, they were all so wise and grave.

Mrs. Broach. There are very few jokes that they relish.—You, gentlemen, have the wit just fitted for 'em,—and whenever you speak among 'em, I have observ'd you never want laughers; now that is being very obliging.

Betty. To be sure *Mr. Oaf* and *Mr. Gosling* have been always the favourite wits of our top men.

Goss. *Jack Oaf* indeed is so comically profane upon all occasions, that he makes them all titter and laugh 'till they are ready to burst.

Oaf. You must know, *Mrs. Broach*, *Will. Gosling* thinks he hath the crack on his side for a bawdy jest. But, for all that, for your double entendres, you know *Mrs. Broach*, there are others may have been as successful as he perhaps.

Goss. You know we promis'd to go back to 'em.

Oaf. 'Twas out of friendship to you, *Mr. Broach*, that we left 'em. We have been talking to miss *Betty* upon the subject already.

Goss. This puppet shew, *Mr. Broach*, I'm afraid will break you.

Mrs. Broach. Break him!—

Oaf. Ay, break him, by *Jupiter*!

Goss. You are a mad-man if you suffer it to be play'd in your house.

Oaf. Is it pleasant, d'ye think, to have the whole corporation upon your back?

Broach. Now, to my thinking, the magistrates seem'd fond of it.

Oaf. Dear *Broach*, I beg your pardon for that. 'Tis the way of our magistrates not to be what they seem; and give me leave to say, I know 'em better than you. Why, dear *Broach*, you would not have a man of consequence say a thing and do it, or say the thing he thinks.—Tho' we are but a country corporation,—you must allow us to know a little of the way of the world.—One would have thought, *Broach*, you too might have known a little of the ways and manners of men in office.

Broach. But what is there then in this piece that can make it of such dreadful consequence?

Oaf. Treason, for ought I know.—I don't know what we may not make it.

Goff. And if it is so, Mr. *Broach*,—'tis not the puppets you will find that will be call'd to account for it.

Oaf. To be sure you must quit the town.—I know it to be a heavy, biting, stupid, malignant satire upon the whole corporation. I know too the fellow was set on by the town of *Afsborough*. If, after this, you suffer it, Mr. *Broach*, though hitherto I have thought well of you, I know what I shall think of the matter:

Broach. I know there are idle reports about master *Peter* and his shew.—But have you seen it, Mr. *Oaf*? have you read it, Mr. *Goffling*?

Oaf. I cannot say that.

Goff. But we know enough of the thing in general.

Oaf. There are things quoted.

Goff. Passages, very obnoxious passages.

Broach. Why then, gentlemen, I must acquaint you that I have heard it repeated; and I could find out none of those dreadful obnoxious passages. I heard nothing that possibly could give offence.

Oaf. As they are not levell'd at you, you might very easily overlook them. Believe me, Mr. *Broach*, the fellow hath impos'd upon you.

Broach. You must excuse me, gentlemen, if I take upon me to believe my own ears in this affair.

Goff. This will never do, *Jack*.

Oaf. But it shall do, before I have done with it. I say it shall not be play'd, and of that I'll bett you fifty pounds, and I say *done* first.

Goff. But you forget that we are engag'd in t'other room.

Oaf. If the magistrates still stick out, we can set their wives upon 'em at last, and then they must do it.—*Broach*, your servant.—When you have consider'd better of this affair——

Goff. You will have reason to thank us. [*Exeunt Oaf and Gosling.*]

Mrs. Broach. But after all, husband, you know our aldermen are a captious sort of gentry; if they but surmise any thing against a man, they never fail of doing him all the real mischief in their power. I think, in prudence, you should not venture to disoblige them.

Betty. The whole of the matter is, *Will Gosling* is afraid the public shews at our house may make his uncle's less frequented. The splutter *Jack Oaf* makes, is the envy and rancour of an author; that's all. I hope my father knows 'em; if he does, I am sure he does not heed 'em.

Broach. I know that they are the spies and buffoons of our aldermen, and that there lies their whole merit and interest; that they have a noisy kind of impertinence too, which fools giggle and laugh at for wit. In short, they are the fustome flatterers of knaves, and (themselves included) the admiration of fools. 'Tis true, they have a general acquaintance, for every body, but men of sense and honesty, like 'em. Know 'em, girl! yes, girl, I know 'em, and would trust 'em with my money sooner than my conversation.

Mrs. Broach. My husband, I find, does know 'em.—

Betty. To a hair.

Mrs. Broach. Poor master *Peter* little thinks how many formidable enemies he hath already, who neither know him, nor are known by him. But yonder he comes; he and you may have something to say to one another, so we'll leave you. [*Exeunt Mrs. Broach*

and Betty.

Enter Peter.

Peter. Landlord, your servant. After the fatigue of the day, one requires a little refreshment; if you will do me the honour to take a glass with me, order a bottle of what you yourself like (for I know I shall like your taste) into my room.

Broach. A bottle of neat — into the *Dragon*, presently. I hope, master *Peter*, the room I have lett you is for your purpose.

Peter. Never was any thing more convenient, and every thing is ready against the evening. Your town, landlord, seems to be a pretty polite kind of place.

Broach. I am no townsman born, sir; a few years ago only, I purchas'd my freedom; for 'tis reckoned a very thriving place for public-houses. As for what is reckoned genteel, master *Peter*, you would think yourself in a great city. We have our balls, our assemblies, and now and then our plays too; we drink, we game, we whore, we run in debt; and in all sorts of extravagancies are perfectly in the mode. But, indeed, sir, I must own that we do abound in knaves and fools; our leading men have not sense enough to be honest; and all I fear is, that they will want parts to relish your performance.

Peter. But sure, sir, your town by this time must have learnt to be polite enough to encourage what it does not understand.

Broach. As for that matter, sir, I should not question your success, provided there were no such things as informers, lies, and prejudice. You have enemies, sir; particular enemies I cannot call 'em neither, but people who wish ill to every creature but themselves. We have such too about our topping men, who are the only people apt to believe 'em, because they are flatter'd by 'em. I dare not explain myself further. As I am at present a townsman, you know, 'tis but prudence in me to keep my tongue within my teeth; I am afraid my good wishes for you, sir, hath made me to say too much already.

Peter. After the odd unaccountable things that have happened to me, I can wonder at nothing. My puppet-

shew, to be sure, hath one great sign of merit, in its time it hath suffer'd violent persecution. My little actors have still the wounds and scars upon 'em that they received by the sword of Don *Quixote*. In my own country I was almost demolished by a mad-man; but I cannot be in such danger now, for fools are an innocent kind of people, and not so mischievous.

Broach. By your way of thinking, master *Peter*, 'tis a sign you have not liv'd long in our town. Mischief is the only spirit fools have; they look upon it too as the best and chief privilege of power, which they every now and then take care to let their neighbours know, that I can tell you.

Peter. But may not I know my enemies? who are they, Mr. *Broach*?

Broach. Those who are afraid you have merit; and if ever you make it appear, you at once make all fools your enemies. It hath ever been so in all times, and in all countries. But 'tis high time to leave the assembly room; some ladies, I see, are coming, and the bottle, master *Peter*, stays for us. Over that, conversation always grows more free and easy. [Exeunt.]

Enter Mrs. Cackle, Lady Ninny, Lady Humdrum, Lady Buffle, Mrs. Braywell, Mrs. Pother, Mrs. Cudden, Mrs. Drone, Miss Slugg, Miss Drawle, Miss Noddipole. They enter two or three in a party, as in conversation.

La. Ninny. Nay, dear Mrs. *Cackle*—

Mrs. Cackle. Pardon me, lady *Ninny*, I know my duty.

La. Humd. Because that creature's spouse was made a knight before mine, she always takes occasion to go just before me in all public places; not that I value precedence a rush, but one hates to see any body so perk'd up, and so fond of it; that's all.

Mrs. Cudden. As for that matter, Lady *Humdrum*, to be sure there is nobody carries a title, and does it more justice than your ladyship. You have the preference of a lady. That, madam, every body that sees your ladyship must allow you.

La. Humd. You were always, *Mrs. Cudden*, extremely civil. If people of distinction knew how to behave themselves to one another as well, we should have less ill blood among us, and there would not be so much scandal stirring.

Mrs. Bray. To be sure, madam, scandal is grown so rife, that if one ever does an imprudent, indiscreet thing, our neighbours buz it about, before one can have an opportunity to find a friend to communicate it to ones-self. O, dear *Lady Buffle*, I beg ten thousand pardons. Let me die, if I saw your ladyship.

La. Buffle. But, dear *Mrs. Braywell*, now—there is no occasion for all this fluster. Really it is disagreeable to have a title, it is so troublesome to one's friends. *Miss Harriet Noddipole!* Come hither, child. Don't you think, *Mrs. Drone*, the girl is very genteel to-night?

Mrs. Drone. As for that matter, madam, I know *miss Harriet* hath not a scrap about her, but what is directly from *London*, and (as we all know) she oftener sets us the fashion than any girl in town.

La. Humd. I thought, child, you had dressed your own heads.

Mrs. Cackle. I vow 'tis mighty pretty.

La. Ninny. Charming!

Mrs. Bray. Delightful!

Mrs. Cudden. Sure never was any thing half so agreeable. Is not this your own handy-work, *miss Harriet*?

Harriet. Excuse me, madam, I leave thimbles to milliners. I hate what your good housewives call work. For those creatures indeed, who do not know how to amuse themselves any other way, 'tis well enough. I can't endure to be able, what they call to do any thing. Now there's *miss Sukey Slugg*, yonder she comes with *Mrs. Pother* and *miss Charlotte Drawle*.—Why, now that girl is very awkward: every body may see she dresses her own heads. *Miss Sukey*, your servant.

Mrs. Pother. One may know by *miss Harriet* that the men are not come yet.

Charlotte. Nay, for that matter, *Mrs. Pother*, I must

own myself like her; for whenever there are men in the room, I hate to converse with women.

Mrs. *Potter*. To be sure, miss *Charlotte*, that is very natural at your time of life.

Suey. But I wonder how any girl can have that assurance to own it. Besides, forward girls do not always make forward men.

Mrs. *Bray*. Beyond all dispute, madam, there was never so hard a case as lady *Buffle's*, last night. I am afraid it will be too much trouble to your ladyship to tell you her game, she hath told it so often, madam.

La. *Buffle*. None of these apologies, I beg you. You must know then, madam, I played without. I play'd in black—in spades; aye, 'twas in spades. I had five matadores and two kings. Now you know, madam, if I had been eldest hand, the matter would have been out of dispute. You was by, Mrs. *Cackle*; pray, madam, do you remember who led? 'Twas — let me see — sir *Nathaniel Ninny*. No! it could not be him, for he sat directly over against me. Now I remember it, 'twas Mr. *Braywell*. — Mr. *Braywell* — yes, 'twas so, led a diamond; I took it with my king, which to my sorrow, was trump'd. My other king was called out of my hand very unluckily the very next card; that sir *Nathaniel* took from me with his only trump, for you must know all the rest now lay in a hand. In short, madam, they drew all the loose cards out of my hand 'till I had only the five matadores. One sees, madam, the thing is just possible to happen, and that's all.

Harriet. Hath your ladyship made your party to-night?

La. *Buffle*. We still want one, child. But if *Jack Oaf* is not already engag'd, we may depend upon him. He and *Will Gossling* are always sure men. But now I think on't, I won't play to-night.

La. *Humd*. Now I chose not to engage myself, for nothing upon earth should keep me from the puppet-show.

Mrs. *Cackle*. Dear Madam, who ever thought of staying from it. The whole town will be there to-night for certain.

La. *Ninny*. There is no body more fond of en-

couraging public diversions than I am, I would not miss it for the world. Now, would you believe it, madam, when I was in *London*—No—I am downright ashamed to tell you how much it cost me in opera's.—And I have no ear for music neither, nor do I understand one word of *Italian*. I know it sounds odd to say it; but for all that, madam, without any affectation, I do think an opera charming.

To them, Jack Oaf, Will. Gosling, with several men, who mingle in conversation with the ladies, whispering, playing at cards, &c.

Mrs. Cudden. Nay, for that matter, madam, I would not have you think I said any thing against miss Charlotte Drawle's understanding. To be sure, that is what all the world must allow her, for there is no woman alive knows *quadrille* more thoroughly; and she almost always wins at it too.

Mrs. Pother. Why, you don't think the girl cheats.

Mrs. Cudden. I don't say that.

Sakey. But, to be sure, madam, every lady that plays (for self-defence) ought to know how.

Oaf. And is your ladyship really in earnest? [*To lady Humdrum, after whispering her.*]

Goff. 'Tis downright madness.

La. Humd. I tell you, Mr. Oaf, I will not be of any party at cards to-night. For nothing shall keep me from the show.

Oaf. Perhaps your ladyship may like to see your friends and relations turn'd into ridicule.

Goff. Nay, for ought I know, ladies, you may hear something of yourselves too. Now, madam, you know, let the thing be how it will, all women have done something or other that they don't care the whole town should know.

Mrs. Drone. To be sure 'tis disagreeable to be put into a flutter.

Harriet. But, dear Jack Oaf, now,—what signifies a joke or two upon the aldermen, supposing the puppets are so impertinent? Don't we, who are their wives and daughters, love now and then to laugh at them among ourselves?

La. Ninny. I beg you, miss *Noddipole*—don't be indiscreet, and quote any thing I may accidentally have said.

— *Mrs. Pother.* Nay, miss *Harriet Noddipole* had better hold her tongue upon this subject, for to be sure nobody hath talk'd freer of her father and uncles than she hath done.

La. Buffle. But, dear Mr. *Oaf*, I am sure sir *Headstrong Buffle*, for that matter, is not afraid of any thing a puppet can say of him. It would be downright ridiculous in us to keep from the shew. Don't your ladyship think so?

Mrs. Bray. I am sure I have heard enough already of what mankind says of my spouse, to be concern'd at any thing the most audacious puppet can say.

Mrs. Cackle. *Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling*, to divert themselves, had a mind to put us all in a fust; but it won't do.

Oaf. If alderman *Braywell* and sir *Headstrong Buffle* had not been called away from dinner, I am positive, *Will*, we should have carried our point among the corporation.

Goss. Pox take 'em—the women, you see, *Jack*, will not bite.

Oaf. Let us look out for sir *Headstrong* and alderman *Braywell*. They are so fair a hit, upon so many accounts, that you know they are captious upon all occasions. We must trump up some new story—

Goss. And I'll vouch it. To be sure, *Jack*, you have a most prevailing turn that way. Let us about it this moment.

Oaf. There will be no cards to-night, I see.—So we'll just make a short visit, and be with you again, ladies, before the shew. [Exit *Oaf* and *Gosling*.]

To them enter *Alderman Cackle*, *Sir Nathaniel Ninny*, *Sir Humphry Humdrum*, *Mr. Cudden*, *Mr. Drone*, *Mr. Slugg*, *Mr. Drawle*, *Mr. Pother*, *Mr. Noddipole*.

Cudden. Now is not this a fine sight, alderman *Cackle*?

Cackle. What, to see our wives squandering and gaming, and running us in debt! neighbour *Cudden*!

Drone. 'Tis a sight that I have been so long us'd to, that, for my part, I cannot see where the fineness of it lies.

Potter. Sir *Nathaniel* here is a sort of gamester himself, and goes halves with his wife in ruining his family.

Drone. You have been among the ladies, Mr. *Slugg*. Do they know any thing of *Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling*?

Slugg. They are gone (horridly out of humour) to make a short visit—They said they would be back time enough for the shew.

Noddi. The ladies are all a-gog for it.

Sir *H. Humd.* *Jack Oaf* is in the wrong. Indeed he is. I thought *Will Gosling* too had a better understanding. A puppet-shew is an innocent thing—Mr. *Drone*, if I remember, you declar'd your opinion very frankly upon this point in t'other room.

Drone. To be sure, sir *Humphry*, I am for it in the main. But for all that, after what *Jack Oaf* and *Will Gosling* have said, we must conclude that this master *Peter* is a very suspicious person.

Noddi. After we have seen the shew, Mr. *Drone*, 'tis time enough to declare our opinion.

Sir *N. Ninny.* That, indeed, Mr. *Noddipole*, may be time enough for us who are no critics; but there is *Oaf* and *Gosling* now are so well acquainted with the manner and style of our writers, that they no sōbner hear an author's name, but they decide upon the performance.

Noddi. To be sure. For they can scarce be called critics, who must hear and read a thing before they will venture to declare their opinion. Any body can do that.

Sir *H. Humd.* Would sir *Headstrong* and Mr. *Braywell* had finish'd their affairs! The moment they come back, we'll adjourn to the shew.

Sir *N. Ninny.* In the mean time, sir *Humphry*, sup-

pose we join in the dance. The fiddles have struck up, and the company, you see, are preparing to begin.

Enter Sir Headstrong Bufile and Mr. Braywell.

Sir H. Humd. I am sorry, sir *Headstrong*, you were not here a little sooner.

Sir N. Ninny. Nay, for that matter, we could have provided you too, Mr. alderman *Braywell*, with a partner.

Enter Pickle, giving about Bills. Trumpet and Drum without.

Pickle. Just going to begin, ladies. We are this moment going to begin, gentlemen. Figures almost as large as the life! They move, walk, and speak as naturally and as well as any of us, gentlemen. Walk in, ladies; walk in, gentlemen, and take your places.

La. Humd. And what is your shew, I pray you, sir? What is the name of it?

Pickle. It hath been the wonder and delight of all *Europe*, ladies! 'Tis the celebrated dramatic entertainment, called *Melifendra*.—Make room there—Make room for the ladies—Pray don't stop up the way—Take money there—I beg you, gentlemen, make way for the ladies. *[Exit aldermen, &c.]*

Enter Jack Oaf, Will. Gosling.

Oaf. What's all the company gone? *[To Pickle.]*

Pickle. Into the shew-room, and we are just going to play away; just going to begin, gentlemen.

[Exit Pickle.]

Gosf. To be sure then sir *Headstrong* and Mr. *Braywell* must be there. Mr. *Broach*, you know, told us they came into this room.

Oaf. We have nothing for it but to send a letter. I can disguise my hand. Pen, ink, and paper here.

[Brought in.]

Gosf. Let a porter too be ready to carry a note immediately. *[Oaf writing, and repeating as he writes.]*

Oaf. At any rate, fir, put a stop to the playing the puppet-shew. Alderman *Braywell* is personally and most maliciously abus'd; fir *Headstrong Buffle* is most inhumanly ridicul'd; nay, the whole corporation are no better treated. You will be made the common jest of *Goatham*, and if you do not put a stop to it, the town of *Afsborough* (for it was they set it on foot) will have their ends. This, as a friend, I thought fit to let you know.

Gosf. This will do, *Jack*, I'm sure this must work.

[Enter porter.]

Oaf. Deliver this to alderman *Braywell*—immediately—you will find him at the shew. But don't say from whence you came, and there's hush money for you—you dog, go. But, to prevent suspicion, let us go there before him. D'ye hear, don't be long after us.

[Exit.]

SCENE, *The puppet-shew-room.*

The whole corporation and their wives, &c. To them enter Jack Oaf and Will. Gosling, who place themselves among the audience.

Sir N. Ninny. Come, the prologue—the prologue.

[Porter delivers the letter, and goes out.]

Pickle. Courteous spectators, see with your own eyes,
Hear with your ears; and there's an end
of lies.

Bray. Hold! stop, not a word more, I charge you.
Cast your eye upon that letter, fir *Headstrong*.

[They all rise, some read and shake their heads; all in commotion.]

Sir Headst. Never was any thing so audacious—A word more, firrah, shall lay you by the heels. Hand it about among the corporation, fir *Humphry*.

Audience. The prologue, the prologue.

Sir Headst. I charge you, fellow—not a word more.

Oaf. What's the matter, fir *Nathaniel*?

Sir N. Ninny. Look you there——

Oaf. I was not to be believ'd.

Sir Headst. To what end hath a man riches and power, if he cannot crush the wretches who have the insolence to expose the ways by which he got them! This is not to be borne!

To them master Peter:

Peter. I beg you, gentlemen, let me know my offence.

Braywall. We know it, and that is sufficient for us to proceed upon. We are not brought so low to suffer every paultry fellow to vindicate himself that we think fit to accuse.

Sir Headst. Such liberties are not to be taken. Call us to an account for our actions! Expose us to the public!

Bray. I have been so long of the corporation indeed to fine purpose, if at this time of day I am not above public censure.

Sir Headst. I won't be talk'd of at all. Who shall dare to talk of their betters?

Cudden. You and your puppets shall be taught better manners, you impertinent fellow, you.

Peter. See it, hear it, gentlemen; you will then find I have been injur'd, and that you have been impos'd upon.

Brayw. Impos'd upon! how impudently the fellow talks before us!

Sir N. Ninny. This is calling us downright fools to our faces! Were you ever impos'd upon, sir *Humphry*?

Peter. But I hope, sirs, you will not disappoint the audience: consider, gentlemen, it will be a great loss to me.

Cackle. And so much the better.

Sir Headst. Such audacious wretches should starve, who, because they are poor, are so insolently honest in every thing they say, that a rich man cannot enjoy his property in quiet for 'em.

Bray. You shall not only dismiss the audience, fellow, but return the money.

Potter. We must keep these wretches down. 'Tis right to keep mankind in dependance.

Sir Headst. 'Tis the rascals who live by their industry, who are so impertinent to us. We should suffer no body in town to get money but by our licence, and then we should never be treated with disrespect. So I tell you once again, it shall not be play'd.

La. Humd. Sir *Headstrong* is horridly provoking now, to hinder us of our diversion, don't you think so, lady *Ninny*?

La. Ninny. Nay, I can't say but I should have lik'd to have heard it—Yet, after all, who knows what an impertinent fellow might have said of any of us? Not that I am afraid of any thing the fellow can say of me.

Harriet. But out of curiosity one would hear a little sample of it.

La. Bustle. After all, sir *Headstrong*, I cannot think the fellow's request so very unreasonable, to be heard first, and judg'd afterwards.

Drawle. There is, without doubt, a little too much compliance in granting it. Yet there have been men in authority who have allowed it. My memory, alack-a-day, is weak, and I cannot remember precedents.

Sir Headst. I have said it, Mr. *Drawle*, and I never retract: the thing shall not be play'd.

Sir N. Ninny. To be sure, sir *Headstrong*, it can never be expected that one of your good sense and resolution should ever retract, or be convinc'd you have been in the wrong—We only ask, that the fellow may be allow'd to give some short account of his shew, or a rehearsal of some of the parts of it; there can be no harm in that sure.

Cackle. Why, we know very well what is in it, sir *Nathaniel*.

Sir Headst. And when a man is determin'd what to do, what signifies hearing what a man has to say for himself?

La. Buffle. Do, dear fir *Headstrong* ; let us hear something of it.

Sir Headst. It looks so like condescension—

La. Buffle. Not at all, fir *Headstrong* ; for, right or wrong, you may still abide by your point.

Sir Headst. The ladies have a curiosity to hear some of your impertinence—You can soon satisfy them.

Peter. All I ask, is to show and prove myself inoffensive. What I propos'd to represent, ladies, was the celebrated dramatic entertainment, called *Melissendra* ; so often play'd in most of the capital cities of *Europe*.

Sir N. Ninny. Who is *Melissendra* ? Who can he mean by *Melissendra* ?

Peter. 'Tis an ancient history, Sir.

Sir H. Humd. That may be—but for all that, if my name began with an *M*, as indeed it doth end with it, I should have a shrewd suspicion it might mean somebody else.

Sir N. Ninny. Nay, he is very near me ; for an *N* is the very next letter that follows it. My name is *Ninny*, you know.

La. Ninny. Dear fir *Nathaniel*, don't interrupt the fellow.

Peter. There stands my interpreter.—Begin, repeat, *Pickle.* We are not permitted to draw the curtain ; suppose it drawn, and now say away.

Pickle. *Melissendra*, ladies, wife to don *Gayferos*, is imprison'd by the *Moors* in *Spain* ; in the town of *San-fuenna*, now called *Saragosa*.

Cudden. Why in *Spain* ? Why must it be in *Spain* ? Did not you, Mr. *Drone*, sell serges formerly to some merchant or other who traded to *Spain* ? I beg you to recollect yourself—He'll be about some of us presently ; that I can see.

Pickle. Pray, gentlemen, have a little patience ; it will be impossible else to go on. The first figure, gallants, we present you is don *Gayferos*, who is so unmindful of the beautiful captive *Melissendra*, that you see him playing at tables. *Charlemagne*, the suppos'd father of *Melissendra*, peeps out, chides, and beats him

for his neglect of her. The emperor, you see, is in a huff—Now, mind, ladies and gentlemen, how he rates his suppos'd son-in-law don *Gayferos*. Pray, silence, gentlemen.

At tables, don I was ever such a sot !
His money squander'd, and his wife forgot !
Haste, rise, reclaim thy poor distressed beauty :
This cudgel else shall ding thee into duty.

Sir *N. Ninny*. Here's a rascal now. Hold, you dog. He might as well have called me by my name. If I did get drunk, and lose my money at play, and I have not what you call reclaim'd my wife ; he means, redeem'd some of her trinkets at the pawnbrokers.—'Tis plain who you mean by your don *Gayferos*. Are family secrets to be divulg'd, rascal ?

La. *Ninny*. How can you be so ridiculous, fir *Nathaniel* ? I beg you don't talk of me.

Sir *N. Ninny*. I was afraid he was going to say something about——

La. *Ninny*. Hold your tongue, I tell you.

Sir *N. Ninny*. Did you ever tell any body of this secret before, my dear ?

La. *Ninny*. No, 'tis yourself have told every body of it now ; you——

Sir *N. Ninny*. What ?

La. *Ninny*. I was going to say, fool. But you know, my dear, I have a great command of myself before company. But, dear fir *Nathaniel*, now don't interrupt him—Let the fellow go on.

Pickle. Don *Gayferos* now flings down the tables, and calls for his armour ; his man (*Punch*) brings it to him. Now listen, gallants. 'Tis don *Gayferos* that speaks.

Thus clad in steel I go to risk my life.
To which his servant says,
To bring home peace, fir ?
No, replies don *Gayferos*,
To bring home my wife.

Sir H. Humd. Never was such audacious impertinence ! My wife and I have our private wars and battles, as other married folks have ; but what's that to anybody else ? My lady and I brought in, in a puppet-show ! this is intolerable. To be sure we shall hear something of you and Mrs. Rother by and by—for I don't believe you have got the better of her yet.

Oaf. This indeed was too plain, sir *Humphry*, downright scandalous ! the fellow should not be suffer'd. [*Lady Humdrum and Sir Humphry seem in a violent dispute.*]

Pickle. The next figure, ladies, is his cousin *Roldan*; who offers to assist him, and in these words encourages him to the undertaking :

Do, cousin, what all worthy knights should do ;
Pride, av'rice, rapine, every vice subdue.

Sir H. Buffle. Let us have no more of this speech. You are very insolent, fellow.

Gest. Pride, avarice, rapine, vice ! Are these words fit to be mention'd before the magistrates of our town ? Every child can tell who he means.

Sir H. Buffle. He hath said his worst of me. I am above calumny—so go on with your impudence.

Pickle. His cousin *Roldan* now lends don *Gayferos* his sword *Durindana*.

Sir N. Ninny. His cousin *Roldan* ! *Roldan* then ('tis a clear point) must mean you, Mr. *Cudden*, for you are my cousin you know ; and to be sure there is some very malignant reflection in this unintelligible passage that he is afraid to explain ; and we shall never find out.

Drawle. 'Tis manifest, sir *Nathaniel*, that it is a most bitter *inuendo*—but indeed I cannot say at what or at whom it is levell'd.

Peter. Pray, gentlemen, have patience.—Hear it out, and you will find *you* mistake the thing entirely.

Pickle. Now the scene changes to the tower of *Saragosa*. *Melissendra* appears at the window in a *Moorish* habit, expecting her spouse from *Paris*.

Sir Headst. *Paris* ! That now is at me.

Bray. No. 'Tis at me.

Sir Headst. I won't have *Paris* mention'd.

Bray. All the world must apply it to me. Do but consider, sir *Headstrong*, I had a relation once there who was hubbled, and bubbled me too to that most conspicuous degree, that we were both look'd upon as fools—

Oaf. Excuse me, Mr. alderman *Braywell*, notwithstanding what you say of your kinsman, the thing is manifestly levell'd at sir *Headstrong*. And there was not so much folly in the affair neither; for all the town agrees that neither Mr. *Potter* nor sir *Headstrong* are a doit the poorer for all that bubbling affair.

Potter. And why should we, I pray? for, you know, when one is to do the corporation service, one may very freely make use of the corporation's money.

Oaf. Take my advice; forbid the play at once, and hear no more of it.

Peter. Let him go on, I beg you—indeed, gentlemen; you will find me inoffensive.

Pickle. A *Moor* steals softly behind *Melissendra*, and kisses her. Then in an open gallery appears the grave *Moorish* monarch *Marfilius*, king of *Sanfuena*. Upon seeing his kinsman and favourite so saucy, he sentences him arbitrarily and immediately to be whipt through the public streets, without form or process, or the shadow of legal proceeding.

Sir Headst. Legal proceeding! I knew he would have t'other slap at me. I don't see why I should be twitted in the teeth upon this score, for I am sure I am for legal proceeding upon all occasions, but when the corporation's or my own affairs require that it should be dispens'd withal. You were out, you see, Mr. *Oaf*, the *Moor Marfilius* is meant at me. Beyond all dispute, I am the *Moor*.

Oaf. No doubt on't, though you are only a private man, you are so considerable a member of the corporation, that the rascal would make you as black as ever he could. As you say, sir, the *Moor Marfilius* must be you.

Goff. And to be sure every body knows who he means by his kinsman and favourite, who is so saucy.

Oaf. Mr. *Potter* is not so blind but he can see where it is meant.

Goff. Nay, for that matter, *Jack Oaf*, by the description, we cannot say which of his kinsmen or favourites he means.—You cannot positively say that he does mean Mr. *Potter*.

Peter. The guilty person can frequently make applications that no body can make but himself. Upon my word, gentlemen, I am perfectly astonish'd at your observations. I hate private slander. As for general satire; the satirist is not to be accus'd of calumny; he that takes it to himself is the proclaimer and publisher of his own folly and guilt. I protest, gentlemen, you have told me several things that I did not know before.—Proceed, *Pickle*, proceed.

Pickle. By this time, you must know, don *Gayferus* is arriv'd at *Saragosa*; and there meeting accidentally with some of his own countrymen and neighbours—

Drawle. Hold, hold, sir. My ears very much receive me, or he mention'd neighbours.

Drone. You were not mistaken, Mr. *Drawle*, I heard it but too plain.

Cackle. Ay. There he is at us all. For you know all of us are neighbours to some body or other.

Drawle. You are out, Mr. alderman *Cackle*. For he must mean, and can only mean, my worthy neighbour sir *Nathaniel Ninny* and myself; for we really are neighbours, call one another neighbours, and live next door to one another.

Cac. le. No such matter, Mr. *Drawle*. The case is plain, he's at all of us.

Sir H. Humd. We'll have no more of this impertinence.

Sir Headst. We'll hear no more on't; neighbours—nothing can be more unguarded!

Bray. Return the money, rascal, and dismiss the audience.

La. Baffle. You are too hasty, husband. Because you yourself know what you are, you think every body else knows it too.—Now that does not always follow.

Audience. The shew, the shew.—Play away.

Sir Headst. Mr. Noddipole, I charge you, keep the peace.

Broach. Till now I never believ'd half that was said against them.

Mrs. Broach. Indeed, husband, I thought 'em only fools.

Audience. The aldermen—smoak the aldermen—huzza!

[*Hooting at 'em as they go out.*]

Peter. Because knaves and fools are a captious set of people, I am to be deny'd the common privileges of industry.

Pickle. 'Tis very hard, 'tis very unlucky. But you have had the satisfaction, sir, to see the fools expose themselves.

Peter. There is nothing to be done here ; they have the power, and we must submit—So to-morrow we'll leave the town. This adventure of ours hath indeed answer'd the main end of a good play. For

The drift of plays, by *Aristotle's* rules,
Is, what you've seen—exposing knaves and fools.

F I N I S.



